ARMENIA

TRAVELS AND STUDIES

VOL. I

ARMENIA

TRAVELS AND STUDIES

BY

H. F. B. LYNCH

Nature's vast frame, the web of human things.
SHELLEY, *Alastor*.

Who can foretell our future? Spare me the attempt.
We are like a harvest reaped by bad husbandmen
amidst encircling gloom and cloud.
JOHN KATHOLIKOS
Armenian historian of the Xth century
Ch. CLXXXVII.

IN TWO VOLUMES

WITH 197 ILLUSTRATIONS, REPRODUCED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND SKETCHES
BY THE AUTHOR, NUMEROUS MAPS AND PLANS, A BIBLIOGRAPHY
AND A MAP OF
ARMENIA AND ADJACENT COUNTRIES

VOL. I

THE RUSSIAN PROVINCES

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PREFACE

THIS book contains the account of two separate journeys in Armenia, the first extending from August 1893 to March 1894, and the second from May to September 1898. Before embarking upon them, I was already familiar with the contiguous countries, having spent a considerable portion of the years 1889 and 1890 in Mesopotamia and Persia. The routes shown in my map from Aleppo to Diarbekr and down the Tigris, and from Batum across Georgia and the Caspian to Resht, were taken during the course of these earlier wanderings, and they contribute no part of the ensuing narrative.

What attracted me to Armenia? I had no interests public or private in a country which has long been regarded even by Asiatic travellers as a land of passage along prescribed routes. One inducement was curiosity: what lay beyond those mountains, drawn in a wide half-circle along the margin of the Mesopotamian plains? The sources of the great rivers which carried me southwards, a lake with the dimensions of an inland sea, the mountain of the Ark, the fabled seat of Paradise.

With each step forward in my knowledge of the countries west of India came a corresponding increase of my original emotion. Sentimental were reinforced by purely practical considerations; and I seemed to see that the knot of politics tightening year by year around these

countries was likely to be resolved in Armenia. I became impatient to set foot upon Armenian soil.

When my wish was realised, my first experiences of the country and of the Armenians in the Russian provinces exceeded my expectations—fringed with doubt as these were by disappointment with much I had seen in the East. So I passed over the Russian frontier, struck across to the lake of Van, and spent the winter in Erzerum.

When I came to setting down on the map my routes in Turkish Armenia, the scantiness of existing knowledge was painfully plain. I soon realised that it would be necessary to undertake a second journey for the purpose of acquiring the necessary framework upon which to hang the routes. Meanwhile the events occurred with which we are all familiar—the Armenian massacres, and the comedy of the concert of Europe.

It was with difficulty that I was at length enabled to return to the country. These later travels were almost exclusively occupied with the natural features, our tents spread upon the great mountain masses, whence plain and lake and winding river were unfolded before us like a map.

Primitive methods were rendered necessary for transferring these features to paper. One is not allowed in Turkey the use of elaborate or obvious instruments, and miles of ground had to be crossed in full view of Turkish officials before reaching the field of our work. But I was able to transport to Erzerum a standard mercurial barometer, which was duly set up in that centre and read several times a day during our absence. We carried two aneroids, a boiling-point apparatus, a four-inch prismatic compass, used upon a tripod and carefully tested at Kew; lastly, a rather troublesome but very satisfactory little instrument called a telemeter, and made by Steward. The measurements were checked by cross-readings with the compass, and we found that they could be relied upon. Once we were upon the

mountains our operations were not impeded, and, indeed, were assisted by the authorities.

I was accompanied on this second journey by my friend, Mr. F. Oswald, who had been helping me disentangle the voluminous works of the great Abich upon the geology of the Caucasus and Russian Armenia. The varied talents of Oswald were of the greatest service to the work in hand, while his society was a constant source of pleasure and repose. He is now engaged with the geological results of this journey, and with a well-considered study of the geology of Armenia as a whole. These he hopes to publish before very long.

The illustrations are for the most part reproductions of my photographs, being a selection from a collection which fills several cases. On my first Armenian journey I was accompanied as far as Erzerum by Mr. E. Wesson of the Polytechnic in London, who not only developed the films and plates upon the spot, but rendered the most valuable assistance in the photographic work. He also displayed the qualities of a veteran campaigner before the journey was done. And I was always missing him after his return home and during the second journey, when the work devolved entirely upon myself.

My cousin, Major H. B. Lynch, now serving in South Africa, travelled with us as far as Ararat and took charge of the camp. It is, I think, a legitimate cause for satisfaction that, except for momentary lapses on the part of the cook, not one of the party during either of the two long journeys fell ill or became incapable of hard work And on both occasions the horses were sold at a small profit when the coast was at length reached.

Why does one write a book? I find it difficult to answer the question, which, indeed, demands a knowledge of human nature greater than any I possess. There are societies and individuals who, I feel sure, would offer a price

if the potential author would agree to keep his material to himself. The sum might probably be augmented by the contributions of weary students; and a revenue could be collected from these various sources far exceeding any royalties received from publishers. Moreover the author would escape the foreboding of condign punishment, which he is made to feel suspended over his head. On the other hand, there is the fascination of feeling possessed by a subject, stronger than yourself and elemental. And there is the joy and the impersonality of the work reacting upon the personality of the writer.

The country and the people which form the theme of the ensuing pages are deserving, the one of enthusiasm and the other of the highest interest. It is very strange that such a fine country should have lain in shadow for so many centuries, and that even the standard works of Greek and Roman writers should display so little knowledge of its features and character. Much has been done to dispel the darkness during the progress of the expired century; and I have been at some pains to collect and co-ordinate the work of my predecessors. In this task I have been assisted by my friend, the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Pelham, to whom the credit of the bibliography accompanying my second volume is due.

In taking leave of the book—and it has been a long connection—the mind rests with pleasure and gratitude upon the help given without stint by fellow-workers in the same or in different fields. To my friend, Mr. R. W. Graves, now Consul-General in Crete, I am indebted for a lengthy spell of hospitality and delightful companionship in distant Erzerum. I have borrowed freely from his intimate knowledge of extensive regions in Turkish Armenia, as well as from that acquired by my friend, Major Maunsell, now our Consul at Van, the principal contemporary authority on Kurdistan. Geheimrath Dr.

G. Radde of Tiflis has rendered me valuable assistance on more than one occasion; and it is also a pleasure to feel conscious in many ways of my obligations to my friend, Mr. L. de Klupffell, formerly of Batum. At home I have received much kindness from Mr. Fortescue of the British Museum library, and from Dr. Mill, who has so long presided over the library of the Royal Geographical Society, and whose recent retirement from that office in order to devote himself to his scientific work is keenly regretted by those whom he encouraged by his assistance and advice. The book has brought me several new friends, among them Mr. F. C. Conybeare of Oxford, the extent of my debt to whom, in various directions, it would be difficult to estimate. Professor Sayce has kindly looked over the sheets dealing with the Vannic empire, and contributed several valuable suggestions. Prof. E. Denison Ross has helped me with the Mussulman inscriptions, besides informing me upon a number of obscure points.

A portion of the narrative of the ascent of Ararat has already appeared in Messrs. Scribner's Magazine, reprinted in *Mountain Climbing*, a book published by this firm. Parts of the concluding chapters of each volume, entitled "Statistical and Political," have seen the light in the shape of a series of articles in the *Contemporary Review*.

H. F. B. LYNCH.

The map which accompanies my first volume will be on sale separately at Messrs. Stanford's in Longacre.

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CHAPTER I

THE COAST AND THE PORT

ON four different occasions, both in summer and in winter, I have sailed along the southern shore of the Black Sea almost from one extremity to the other; yet I do not remember having seen the sky free from heavy clouds during two consecutive days. As the ship speeds eastwards along the mountains of Bithynia, a thin veil of haze will blend the land outlines together; while, as the range grows in height with every mile of progress, the vapour will collect about its upper slopes in long, horizontal, black banks. Even when the sun of this southern climate has swept the sky of every lingering film, when the zenith and the water recall the hues of the Mediterranean—the whole scale of brilliant blues—somewhere upon the wide circle of the horizon will be lurking the scattered forces of the mist. But the stronghold of the cloud is in the mountains of Akhaltsykh, at the foot of Caucasus, in the extreme eastern angle of the sea. Can there exist a more gloomy coast? There the sky is always lowering above the inky water, and the forests of fir which clothe the range from foot to summit wave darkly, like feathers over a pall. Such, I think, are the impressions which the mind most closely associates with the aspect of this sea and shore. What a contrast to the smiling landscape of the Bosphorus, the strait through which we enter this sad sea or leave it on our return home! The cold draught follows the home-coming ship up the narrow channel between the wooded cliffs, and frets the running tide into crisp little waves which sparkle in the brilliant light. The dolphins leap from the blue water and dart shining through the air. To the traveller who is returning from a long journey in Asia and a tedious tossing on this grey sea, the Bosphorus, always bright and gay and

beautiful, may appear as the promised gate of paradise beyond the world of shades.

The character of the coast cannot fail to be affected by this climate, by this atmosphere. Just as the vapours gather thickest where the mountains are most lofty, at the south-eastern angle of the sea, so the vegetation increases in luxuriance and variety the further eastwards we proceed on our course. The cliffs or rolling hills about the entrance of the Bosphorus—the closing cliffs of the Greek legend, which caught the tail-feathers of the dove—soon give place to the belt of wooded mountains which rise from the immediate margin of the water, and stretch from west to east along the entire seaboard to the Phasis and Batum. Tier upon tier they rise from the narrow strip of sand and pebbles, and grow both in height and in boldness of outline as they stretch towards the east. The winds of the open sea, the cold winds of Scythia, fly over the barrier of the range; and the ship may often anchor in smooth water at a point where least protection would appear to be offered by the configuration of the shore. But the moisture of the air is arrested at the coast-line, and hangs about the upper tiers of the mountains or clings to the fir-clad slopes. These natural conditions are extremely favourable to vegetation, and the larger grows the scale upon which they are operating, the more abundant becomes the growth of trees and shrubs. When at last we have reached the neighbourhood of the Phasis, where the wall of this range towers highest above us on the one side, and the line of Caucasus closes the horizon on the other, the shore becomes clothed with dense forests, plants and creepers flourish with tropical exuberance; the traveller, threading the maze of evergreen woodland, might be walking along the banks of the Amazon or through the glades of Mazanderan.

August 13, '94.—Our ship is outward bound for the banks of the Phasis, "the furthest point to which vessels sail." It was evening when we hove anchor from Constantinople, and night had already closed as we passed the cliffs of Buyukdere and opened the mouth of the strait (Fig. 1). This morning we are skirting the Bithynian mountains, our head well up towards Amasra, behind us the bluff of Cape Baba, a promontory of twin hills. That cape hides the site of Heraklea, one of the most important of the old Greek cities, now patched with the relics of its former splendour, and shorn of the glory of its statue of Herakles, with lion-skin, club, quiver, bow and arrows all wrought of solid gold.

The same lofty coast and bold headlands accompany our course; in a few hours we double Cape Karembe, and the sun has not yet set as we cast anchor off Ineboli, the outlet of the rich districts about Kastamuni, and perhaps at present the most prosperous of these western Pontic ports.

Herakli, Ineboli, Sinope, Samsun—the ships often stop at one or two of these places; yet how little now remains of the old Greek cities of the Argonautic shore! Step on land, and there are the high-prowed galleys drawn up, quite in the ancient fashion, upon the narrow strip of sand. But the hill to which we look for the ancient akropolis appears bare of any building now, and it is only

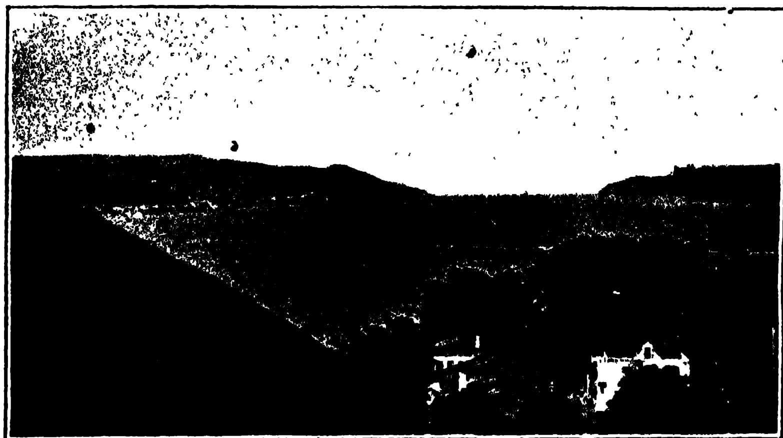


FIG. 1. ENTRANCE TO THE BLACK SEA FROM THE BOSPHORUS.

by careful searching and diligent enquiry that you will find some faced stone with a Greek inscription of the Roman period built into the buttress of a modern bridge, or mocking the ruder masonry of a Turkish wall. Here at Ineboli, indeed, half-bedded in the soil a few paces from the shore, lies a shining fragment of white marble with sculptures in relief. A line of white-faced houses with roofs of red tiles nestles beneath the mountain wall. The Greeks live on one side, the Turks on the other; and the intelligent man to whom you naturally address yourself is an Armenian in European dress. Our ship does not call at Sinope this voyage—Sinope of the open site and spacious roadstead, whose walls seem to have resisted the general crumbling, and rise from the water a still perfect model of a fortified mediæval town. During the night we round the hump of Anatolia, and before

mid-day we are lying in the bay of Samsun, towards the centre of the long curve lined with white-faced, red-tiled houses, beyond which the ruined walls of ancient Amisus still emerge from the briars on the summit of the hillside which closes the landscape on the north-west. But at Samsun also destruction has been busy; I look in vain for the massive tower of old acquaintance at the south-eastern extremity of the shore. I recognise the spot where it stood at the end of the long sea-wall, some parts of which still remain; but the foundations alone have escaped demolition, and the few large blocks of stone which still lie scattered on the ground testify rather to the carelessness of the Turkish building-contractor than to any respect on the part of his employers for the beauty and interest of their town.

The sites of these coast towns have been determined by the characteristics of the range of wooded limestone ridges which rise along the shore. Sometimes it will be a cleft in this latitudinal belt of mountains, a transverse fissure in the grain of the range, which, with its rustling river giving access to the interior, has attracted a settlement. The eye rests with pleasure on the deep green of these narrow valleys; the limestone towers high above them and protects the rich growth of trees and shrubs. Or the range recedes from the margin of the water, sweeping inland in the shape of a vast amphitheatre, and curving outwards again to form a distant promontory of the bold and sinuous coast. The first description will apply to the position of Ineboli; the second may be illustrated in a typical manner by the site of Samsun. There the open stage of the wide hemicycle is filled with rolling hills and level expanses which yield abundant crops of cereals. It is true that the estuaries of the two larger rivers, Halys and Iris, present exceptions to the normal configuration of the seaboard. These considerable streams form extensive deltas which project far out into the sea. For awhile, as you pass them, you almost lose sight of the mountains, and the view ranges across low, marshy tracts, studded with trees. As we skirted the delta of the Halys, we looked down upon such a wooded plain across a narrow bank of sandy shore. It appeared as if inside that slender barrier the solid land had sunk beneath the level of the waters upon which we sailed. The delta of the Halys is as celebrated for its tobacco as that of the Iris for its Indian corn, and Bafra and Charshembeh are becoming serious rivals to the old Greek cities of the coast.

Indeed, even along this remote seaboard the flowing tide of Western civilisation is surely setting eastwards again. How the conditions of human life around these lonely waters have altered within the last sixty years! Sixty years ago the first steamer drew her train of smoke and foam past these forelands and bays of still uncertain fame. The slave ships infested the harbours of the coast, and if a sail rose upon the horizon it was likely to be a slaver's sail. Armed bands still forayed into the recesses of Georgia for their loot of beautiful boys and girls, and parents who wished to preserve their daughters from the market would place them, when quite children, in one of the numerous fortified convents which crowned the summits of their native hills. Slowly the grip of law has fastened upon the peoples of Caucasia, a stern force moving with the insistence of a vice from distant Russia, from the north; while from the west, with, perhaps, less system, less coherence of methods, European commerce creeps along this Turkish shore of the sea, and extends ever further into the inland country the solvent influences of her sway. Already towards the middle of the century the Russians swept these waters with their steam cruisers, while their police boats blockaded all the coast of Circassia to guard against the import of arms. Only when the season was most tempestuous, when the cruisers had retired within their harbours and the Cossacks no longer dared to face the open sea, the captain of the slave ship would venture out upon his perilous voyage from some wooded inlet of the eastern shore. At the present time this traffic has either ceased entirely or is conducted through obscure and secret channels, where it would be difficult to trace. To Russia belongs the credit of this achievement, which has accompanied the extension of her empire down the eastern coast of the Black Sea. To Europe and to the increasing intercourse with European markets is due the growing prosperity of these towns of the Turkish seaboard, and indeed the very appearance which they present. New houses, in construction far more solid than their predecessors, are transforming the aspect of the shore; burnt bricks or stone masonry take the place of wood, and these materials are faced with a coat of concrete, painted a pure white. The window apertures are large, and at evening or morning a row of wide glass panes reflects the glow. Even the Government can show some signs of progress; carriageable roads have been constructed to the towns of the interior, from

Ineboli to the inland centre of Kastamuni, from Samsun to Amasia and Sivas.

August 15.—Weighing from Samsun at night, it is early morning as we cast anchor off Kerasun—Kerasun with its castled rock thrown seawards from the range, the lofty headland of the bay, from which the town curves westwards and sinks to the waterside under the shadow of the mountain wall. Were it not for the needle forms of minaret and cypress, rising against the terraces of white walls and red roofs which mount from the water's edge, we might be sailing on the Rhine, past some grim old burgh, dominating the cluster of peaceful habitations which cower at its skirts. In less than three hours the barges are emptied, and we are proceeding on our course. Almost immediately we pass close to a little island, a rare object along this shore. It is a mere fleck of rock, picturesquely encircled by feudal walls and towers. The range on our right hand is always rising in elevation; hard porphyritic rocks are beginning to take the place of the crumbling limestone; the ridges, clad with firs to the very summits, stand up one behind another ever loftier and more abrupt. At the same time the lower slopes increase in verdure; orchards and plantations clothe each respite of open ground. Small settlements succeed one another more closely, the houses peeping out with their white faces from the soft, leafy background of green.

Such is the appearance of the shore we are skirting this morning—the range growing in height, the vegetation increasing, the characteristic beauties of the coast now, perhaps, for the first time imprinting a lasting image upon the mind. Like the Mediterranean, this sea is almost tideless—the narrow strip of sand, upon which the waves plash, is unencumbered with those oozy beds of giant seaweed which, scattered in fragrant streamers upon our English seaboards, whet the freshness of our sea-breeze. Beyond this margin rise the first spurs of the mountains, or immediately descend into the deep, clear waters in the form of bold capes. If this coast yields to some in variety of outline, and is wanting in those combinations of sinuous bays and sea-thrown islands which lend such beauty to the landscapes of western Asia Minor and to the European shore of the Mediterranean Sea, it is surpassed by none in distinctness of character, in singleness of effect. Day after day it is the same long belt of mountains always following the shore, the same long series of

parallel ridges rising roughly parallel to the shore. The persistence of the range, the regularity of the system, the many signs along the seaboard of an ever-increasing development in the scale of the mountain walls which lie behind—all contribute to the growing consciousness that this foot of the barrier, the pleasing inlets of this shore, are but the threshold of some commanding piece of natural architecture of which we long to realise the plan. While the imagination is stimulated by this largeness of feature, the eye also is pleased. Groves of lofty fir trees clothe the slopes and climb the summits, standing out on the undulating backs of the ridges against the light of the sky. Wherever the soil favours, there are pretty orchards, and an abundant growth of plants and trees. Nature strikes the first note of that "evergreenness" for which the coast of Kolchis has been famed.

Towards mid-day we are holding up for a well-defined headland, projecting towards the north. It is distinguished by bold bluffs, breaking off in the form of cliffs before they reach the water's edge, and by a succession of deep valleys which descend on either side to the margin of the shore. It is the promontory of the "sacred mountain"—Hieron Oros, now called Yoros, Ieros, or simply Oros—and it forms the western border of that series of smaller indentations which make up the beautiful bay of Trebizond. Platana, most picturesque of little settlements, nestles well under the shelter of this cape upon the west, when once you have doubled the points; while on the eastern side of the bay, exposed to the strong north-westerly winds of the seaboard, lies the site of the old city of Trebizond. From this port starts the principal avenue of communication between Turkish Armenia and the sea; and beyond the mountains, on the south of this wild coast range, now traversed by a metalled road, lie the plains of the Armenian tableland. The width of this mountain belt which borders Armenia—this continuous chain of latitudinal ridges which, rising one behind and higher than the other, lead up like a ladder to the edge of the Armenian plateau—is on this section of the range a direct distance of nearly fifty miles. When the roses are blowing in the gardens of the seaboard, the Armenian rivers may be bound with ice; an unbroken sheet of snow may dazzle the eyes of the traveller, as he penetrates from this border country of parallel crests and depressions to the open landscapes of the tableland.

Fifty miles of intricate mountain country, inhabited at all periods by a sparse and little civilised population of doubtful or

mixed race! The fact goes far towards explaining the isolation of Armenia, the remoteness throughout history of the great grain-growing plains of the interior from the coast towns of the Black Sea. While the Greek cities of the seaboard, sheltered behind the barrier of the range, found a natural and almost uninterrupted connection with the main currents of Western history and Western life, the Armenian country and people, full exposed to the revolutions of Asia, belonged essentially to the East.

Yet these crumbling walls and towers, emerging at intervals from a leafy overgrowth of creepers and trees, claim a larger share of our attention than a merely passing notice of the port of Trebizond. For, in the first place, no traveller, about to enter the interior by this well-known and well-beaten route, can fail to undergo the spell which belongs to these ruins, or to feel his interest aroused by the monuments which still remain here of an empire long forgotten in the West. Nor will a mind which has been fed upon Western literature ignore the importance of realising the events of Western history as they touch this remote shore. The annals of Trebizond, while they illustrate and in themselves to a great extent resume the fortunes of these coast towns, were joined by a thread which was seldom severed to the web of Western things.

August 16.—The morning is the time to arrive at Trebizond, perhaps to wake when the ship lies secure at anchor, while a fresh land-wind blows. The vessel coming from the west crosses the bay from Cape Ieros to an answering headland in the east, and does not bring up till she has doubled this lesser promontory and closed or almost closed the wide bay from sight. The anchorage lies at the foot of the eastern suburb of the city, now the most flourishing portion of the town, and the suburb mounts the back of the little promontory, and descends to the water on the opposite or western side. The inlet which recedes from the cape is not deep or extensive, and the shelter which it offers is so partial that in stormy weather a ship may be obliged to run for Platana, and seek shelter under the lee of Cape Ieros, now some fifteen miles away. This configuration of the shore may be said to give two faces to the site of Trebizond. While the ancient city with the ruins looks seawards and westwards, commanding the softer landscape of the bay, to the anchorage belongs an easterly aspect, and a view past the estuary of the famous river Pyxitis along the wildest portion of the coast range.

Facing the anchorage, on the east of the white houses which climb the western skirts of the rising land, a bold cliff towers up above the water with abrupt walls of dark rock. The face of this cliff is almost bare of vegetation; but the summit, which is flat, is completely covered with a soft carpet of old turf. The elevation of this lofty platform above the sea-level is 850 feet. East and west the hill descends with gentler gradients, on the one side to the estuary of the Pyxitis, and on the other to the little cape and to the town; but whether you approach it from the city or from the river valley, the slopes are no light matter to climb. On the south it joins on to the half-circle of the coast range, which recedes from beyond the river in a wide amphitheatre, embracing both the bays and all the town. Thus the town itself is shut off from the level ground about the river by this peninsula of table-topped rock; and while one road climbs these slopes to unite the two valleys, the other winds outwards along the foot of the cliff, following the curve of the shore.

I remember that, when for the first time I looked out upon the city, I was at once impressed with the manner in which this bold natural feature corresponded to the name of the town (Τραπεζοῦς). Could the shape which is denoted by the figure of a table be presented by Nature in a more convincing manner than by this mass of rock, towering up above the sea and from the valleys to a summit which is almost perfectly flat? Yet the name does not appear to take its origin in a justification at once so striking and so clear, but rather to derive from the configuration of the ground in the western bay upon which the ancient fortress was built. Still this platform is surely the most impressive characteristic of the site of Trebizond. The Turks, who have no antiquarian sympathies, apply to it the bald and undiscriminating appellation of Boz Tepe, the grey hill, basing the name upon the colour of the trachytic rock of which the hill is composed. The Greeks of old knew it as the Mount of Mithros—Mithrios—from a statue of the god Mithras which used to stand upon this elevated spot. It is not easy to imagine a more delightful ground of vantage from which to overlook the town and command the coast. You may step a distance of some 500 paces by 200 on a level surface of springy turf, with no object between you and the wide expanse about you, in air which is at once full of sun and vigorous; and, if the day be clear, you may descry beyond the

endless stretch of water the faint blue line of distant Caucasus closing the horizon in the east.

The anchorage of Trebizond receives the first flush of morning; a mellow light is thrown upon the terraces of the eastern suburb, circling seawards down the lower slopes of Mount Mithros to the point of the little cape. Here and there among the buildings rows of tall cypresses still hold the shadows of night; but the white faces of the houses soon dispel the darkness, and their glass windows reflect in a glow of dazzling splendour the lurid brilliance of the rising sun. Nowhere else than in these landscapes of the Black Sea and the Caspian is the dawn more essentially the "rosy-fingered," or the sea at sunrise "the glass-green." As the rays commence to break, the wind freshens and the black cypresses wave and sway. Down the coast, beyond the dark cliff of Mithros, the mountains of the seaboard are massed in savage parapets beneath the rising sun; the faithful clouds cling to their slopes or float above them, a sky of cold, silvery greys. Westwards, above the point of the little promontory, under the immediate lee of which we lie, you just discern the softer setting of the greater bay itself, as the outline of the range sweeps in long undulations far out into the western sea. The day wakes; the colours start; the world of pinks and opals disappears. The aspect of the town is warm and genial, even in winter, when the background of broken ridges look their wildest and the sparse fir trees stand out darkly from the snow. Sunny meadows and flashes of green turf caress the traveller, who may have journeyed through the long Eastern summer and autumn in countries where scarcely a blade of grass grows. The shore is soon astir, and the cries of the boatmen are carried down the wind. Large, high-prowed galleys bear down upon us, the crews racing for the first berth. We are surrounded by a swarm of ragged human beings, shouting, scrambling, gesticulating, as their boats and heavily laden barges drive against our tall iron sides.

The steamers anchor at some little distance from the shore, and it takes a long pull, at a time when the wind is setting off the land, to reach the little mole. The shore-boats are manned with ill-miened youngsters, whose clamour never ceases from ship-side to landing-stage. On the quay are arrayed the customs officers and their assistants, motley groups in which the cast-off wardrobes of Europe mingle with the coloured cottons of the East. What a relief to escape from all this turmoil, to repose for

a few minutes in a spacious coffee-house, rising high above the harbour and the noise! A youth is just completing his lustral service of the morning; the floor has been swept and watered, the nargilehs are coiled—the peaceful figure of Ion rises in the mind.

Our road leads up the hillside, at first by the town garden and wide streets, lined with houses and shops built in European style, and then through the narrow alleys which intersect the Christian quarters, a labyrinth of winding ways. These *streets* of Trebizond have a width not exceeding six or eight feet, and sometimes less, and are lined by the dull walls of garden enclosures which shut out all prospect over the town. A raised pavement runs along them, sometimes on both sides of the way, and always on one. Here and there the fresh green leaves of a fig tree overhang the walls, or the cherry-laurel with its clusters of claret-coloured fruit, or the pink flowers of the oleander. The houses are, for a great part, quite Eastern in character—blank, featureless wall, broken only at mid-height by little windows with gratings made of laced strips or mortised cubes of wood. But the modern villa is rapidly taking their place.

What waifs of all the ages may be met within these alleys! Yet I think, and our Consul, Mr. Longworth, seems inclined to agree with me, that the Greek type prevails. Our conversation turns upon these race questions; one can indeed never cease learning what fallacious guides in such questions religion and nationality are. There are whole villages on this seaboard whose inhabitants are Mussulmans, and would resent being called by any other name than *Osmanli*; yet their Greek origin is established both by history and by the traditions which they themselves still in part retain. Thus take Surmeneh and Of, two considerable villages on the east of Trebizond. These versatile Greeks are as famous now for their theological eminence as they were formerly under the Eastern Empire, with this difference, that whereas in those days they supplied the Church with bishops, it is now mollahs that they furnish to Islam. Yet, fanatical as they are, they still hold to certain customs which connect them with the old faith they once served with such distinction, and have, no doubt, since persecuted with equal zeal. Under the stress of illness the Madonna again makes her appearance, her image is again suspended above the sick-bed; the sufferer sips the forbidden wine from the old cup of the Communion, which still remains a

treasured object with the whole community, much as they might be puzzled to tell you why. As we are talking, a little girl happens to pass down the lane, a child of some ten years. Her limbs are scarcely covered by a loose cotton skirt, although her complexion has not suffered from the sun. The waxen texture of the flesh, the transparent colouring, and the rich setting of auburn hair remind one of the favourites of Venetian painters and of faces seen in North Italian towns. It is besides only natural that the people of this city should possess a strain of Italian blood; not so many centuries ago the Genoese controlled the commerce and menaced the independence of Trebizond.

It is a long climb from the anchorage to the British Consulate, which, although within the limits of this suburb of gardens, has an elevation of at least 150 feet. Still, the site has the advantages of a middle position between the old fortified city in the western bay below us and the open walks around Boz Tepe. And if the mornings be devoted to the town and the ruins, the evenings may be spent on that airy platform or upon the lonely slopes of the adjacent hills.

There are many pleasant spots which, in the course of these rambles, invite a view over the town. The landscape which you overlook is that of the west—the vague succession of endless little capes and inlets, disappearing and combining to form the single feature of a wide and open bay. Below you lies the old city, mediæval walls and towers, overgrown by a canopy of leaves, gently sloping to the sea (Fig. 2). Yet, however beautiful in itself may be the scene that expands before you, it is rather upon the thoughts and the memories which it raises that the mind is inclined to dwell. The sea is not so much the blue floor without limits to which the sinuous outline of the coast descends, as the open thoroughfare which leads across to Europe, joining Asia to the West. The fir-clad ridges, which close the prospect towards the interior, are rather the first outrunners of that wide belt of troughs and ridges in which so many armies have become entrapped, than the background of sterner features which supports the peaceful landscape in which the ruined burgh lies. The scene itself is the same that brought tears to the eyes of Xenophon, and which was associated in the mind of the Emperor Hadrian with his first view of this shore and sea.

But the morning is not the time, nor is this the occasion for such retrospective thoughts. Fresh from sleep, our first interest

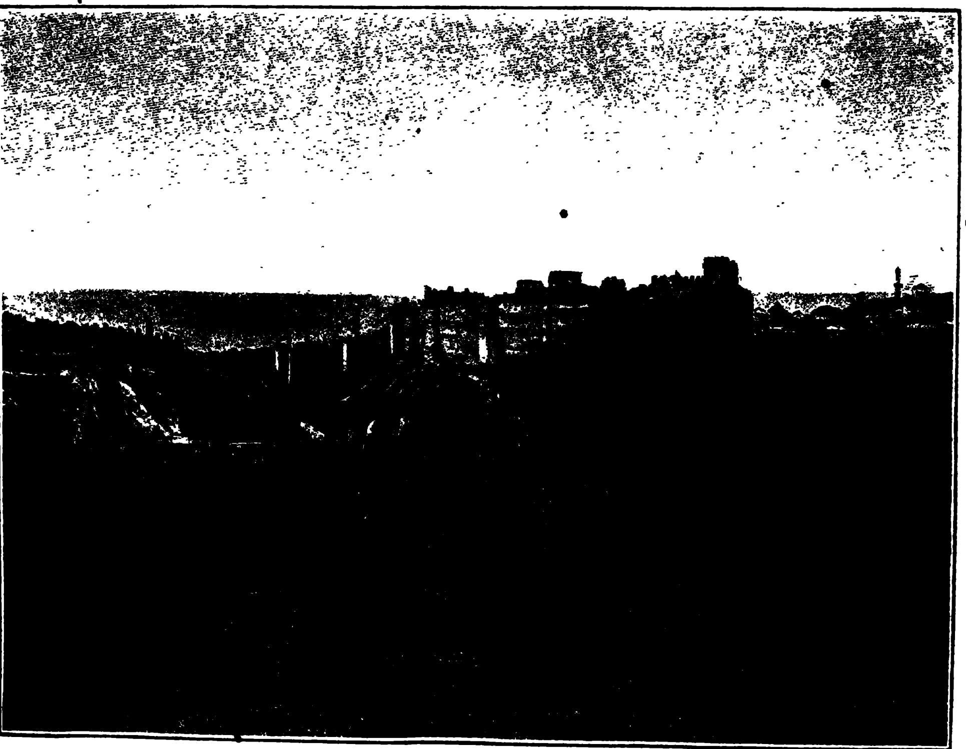


FIG. 2. TREBIZOND FROM ABOVE THE HEAD OF THE WESTERN RAVINE.

is the ivy-grown ruins of Trapezus, which lie far below us in the western bay. We descend from the slopes about Boz Tepe, by the neat villas and garden enclosures of the eastern suburb, to the ravine which separates this suburb, with the anchorage and commercial quarter, from the site of the old fortified town. It is indeed a position not readily forgotten and not easy to mistake. If the descriptions of Trapezus which have come down to us portray in a defective manner the many remarkable features which are characteristic of the place, they, at least, leave no doubt as to the identity of the historical city with the position of these ruins. At the foot of the precipitous slopes of Boz Tepe, on the western side of that table-topped hill, the surface of the ground is broken by two deep ravines, which, at a narrow interval, descend from the interior to the seaboard about at right angles to the margin of the shore. They represent the lower course of two of those wooded valleys of which the landscape towards Cape Ieros contains a succession, various in feature, but in character the same. Peculiar to these two ravines is their close proximity to one another; the streams which flow along them are only about 400 yards apart as they approach the sea. Indeed, at one point, over 1000 yards from the coast, the mass of rock by which they are separated forms a neck or isthmus of which the top is less than 60 yards across. In this manner a site is constituted which is bounded on three sides by natural defences—on the west and east by the ravines, and on the north by the sea. Draw a wall across the neck or narrowest portion of the rock, and you at once enclose the figure of an irregular parallelogram, of which the fourth side is the short cross-wall. These natural features, so favourable for defence, have not escaped the ingenuity of man; the cross-wall has been built in the shape of a massive tower and citadel, while the inner sides of the ravines have been lined with walls and castellations, which still frown above the leafy abysses and the streams rustling through the shade.

In appearance the protected enclosure, with its flanking ravines, has been described by some writers as a peninsular plateau, while to others it has suggested the shape of a table and seemed to justify the name of Trebizond (Τραπεζοῦς). Neither likeness appears to me to be quite happily chosen. Both contain in themselves the conception of a disparity of levels, the plateau of a stage raised above the surrounding country, the table above the surface of the floor. Such are not the characteristics of the

site. The metaphor of a table seems the more inappropriate, inasmuch as the least one might expect of such an object is that it should have a flat and horizontal top. This site possesses neither of these qualities. On the one hand, the upper portion, which supports the citadel, rises above the lower like a dais or step; while, on the other, the plane of the ground is an inclined plane, and follows the general configuration of the country, shelving from the hills towards the sea.

Yet these images and the impressions from which they derive are no doubt founded upon real conditions. The isolation of the figure, together with its elevation—not indeed above the levels which adjoin it on either side, but above the level of the sea—these are the two factors which have supplied the real substance of such impressions. The first of these features would appeal to the eye with more distinctness, were it not for the thick growth of trees and underwood which rises from the floors and up the slopes of the ravines, and almost conceals the escarpment of their sides. The depth of the gulfs may be gauged by the following measurement made at the head of the western ravine. Standing at the bottom of the abyss, the rock which supports the citadel and palace overtops you by about 150 feet at the highest point. The width across them, from cliff to cliff, varies considerably, according as each gulf opens or closes in; the length of each of the two bridges which span the ravines is about 100 paces. Both ravines tend to flatten as they descend towards the shore, or in other words, to increase in width and diminish in depth. As for the elevation of the enclosure, it is of course most considerable at the narrow isthmus and the citadel. This highest portion, containing the keep and palace, is about 200 feet above the sea.

It is plain from the description which has just been given that the characteristic features of the site attain their greatest development in that part of the enclosure which is most remote from the shore; that it is there the protecting gulfs are deepest, and the rock loftiest which they flank. Indeed, during the Byzantine and earlier Comnenian periods the fortress was confined to this upper portion, and the outer wall on the side of the sea was drawn from gulf to gulf at a distance of about 460 yards from the present margin of the shore. A few sentences may suffice to present the plan of the fortifications, as it may be traced among the ruins that remain. At the very head of the

formation came the keep and citadel, the outer wall being drawn across the narrow isthmus between the two ravines; this was the weakest point in the whole circumference of the fortress, and the works were strongest upon this side. Built into this outer wall stands a massive square tower, which rises boldly above the battlements and faces the approaches from the south. The ground shelves upwards almost from the immediate foot of the tower to the amphitheatre of hills which surround the bay. Thus the fortress is commanded by the slopes upon the south, where already it is by nature most vulnerable. It was from the south that its assailants delivered their principal attacks: the Goths, the Georgians, the Seljuks, the Turkomans, the Ottoman Turks. All the space inside the wall and between the two ravines was filled up at this uppermost part of the fortress, first by the keep, and then by the palace itself; the citadel served as the kingly residence, and the wall with the bold windows which rises along the edge of the western ravine was alike fortress and palace wall. This uppermost fortress or citadel, with the palace of the king, was separated from the lower but more extensive portion of the site by a cross-wall, equal in height to the walls along the ravines, and supported at either end by towers. So much loftier is this upper stage than the stage which lies below it that, whereas the palace, which occupies the most elevated point, towers high above the battlements of the cross-wall, the base of this wall itself overtops the highest buildings of the second and lower stage.

Below the cross-wall, with its massive double gate, lay that part of the fortress which contained the cathedral and public buildings, and formed the inhabited portion of the original fortified town. Like the citadel, it was protected on two sides by the ravines, lined on their inner edge by a lofty wall seven feet in thickness, with towers at intervals. A second cross-wall, extending from ravine to ravine, was its bulwark on the side of the sea, and constituted the outer rampart of the enclosure as it existed in the ancient form. This outer rampart followed the edge of a natural declivity in the surface of the shelving ground, and presented a bold front to the lower levels lying between it and the shore.

The third and lowest stage of the fortified enclosure filled the space that yet remained between this outer wall of the city and the immediate margin of the sea. The ravines open outwards as

they approach the seaboard, and the figure widens which they bound; but on the other hand, the sides of these natural barriers flatten and take the surface of the adjoining ground. Thus the plan of the lower fortress did not display the same subservience to the natural features of the site, and was protracted on the west beyond the outer margin of the western ravine. Indeed, the area enclosed by this later work of the fourteenth century was considerably greater than that of the ancient burgh; and in proportion as it was deficient in natural defences, so it was stronger in those of art. A wall six feet and a half in thickness, with towers at irregular intervals, surrounded the new work; and, except on the side of the sea, this rampart was flanked by a second and lower wall with a moat on its outer side. But, although the lower fortress formed a third and separate unity, overstepping the natural limits of the site, it was connected in the closest manner with the upper enclosure, and with the walls flanking the ravines. On the east the new ramparts joined the old wall, and continued its direction in a straight line to the shore, at which point they turned at right angles, along the shore. Thus the old cross-wall was completely covered by the new fortifications, and the principal gate of the old city, leading through that wall and facing the sea, instead of standing at the outer extremity of the fortress, now became situated in about the middle of the fortified plan. The new wall along the sea was protracted further westwards than the western extremity of the old cross-wall; it was drawn across the mouth of the western ravine, and far overlapped the parallel line of the old wall. Some little distance west of the depression it again changed direction, and stretched up towards the south, until it reached a point opposite to the bridge which leads out from the middle fortress, and over 100 paces from the edge of the ravine. From this point, which was emphasised by a rectangular tower of extraordinary size, the line of wall was taken at right angles, and met the margin of the ravine.

This threefold disposition of the walls and fortifications is characteristic of the plan of the fortified city, and forms a feature well noted in the descriptions of the topographers and still distinguished in popular speech. Indeed, even at the present day, when most of the great gates have disappeared, and houses with several storeys obscure the plan, the hillside is lined by three complete fortresses, each separated from the other and one

higher than another, yet all three welded closely into one. The appearance of the city in the days of her splendour must have justified her reputation as "Queen of the Euxine," and lent colour to her claim to be the capital of a restored Roman Empire of the East. Between extensive suburbs, filled with busy streets and markets, rising from the shore on either hand, through a labyrinth of gardens and garden-houses, clustered on the higher slopes, the two converging lines of massive parapets and towers mounted slowly up the shelving ground. The further they receded from the margin of the seaboard, the clearer grew the essential features of the site—the ravines opening darkly at the immediate foot of either wall, the walls closely following the irregular course of the chasms, and now rising, now declining, along the uneven surface of the cliffs. Near the head of the figure stood the royal palace, raised high above the massive works of the citadel, deeply moated by the sister gulfs on either side. Broad windows opened from the royal reception hall of white marble to the varied prospects on every side, while within, the vast apartment was adorned with rich paintings, the portraits of successive holders of the imperial office, their insignia and arms. On the east, beyond the abyss, the slope gathered gradually to the side of Mithros, the table-topped hill, in which direction, just opposite the palace, the church and fortified enclosure of St. Eugenius crowned an almost isolated site which was flanked on the further side by a third and lesser ravine. Towards the interior, on the side of the narrow isthmus, the view ranged wide, above the battlements, over the hills encircling the broad bay; while the rising ground, opening upwards from the tongue of the isthmus, was occupied by the theatre and by the extensive walled enclosure of the polo-ground or hippodrome. A royal gate gave access from the palace to these pleasure-places, the distance of a short walk from the wall; and through this gate the imperial party and their brilliant court would pass to their marble seats above the race-course, whence the whole landscape of city and field and ocean lay outspread at their feet. If the several divisions of the fortified enclosure may be described as so many steps, or shelving terraces, rising one behind another from the shore, then the race-course outside the walls will be the fourth stage of the platform, the last and highest, and the fairest of all. Indeed the prospect over the walls and towers of the city to the distant sea beyond must at all times have been one of

surpassing beauty, whether seen from the windows of the Imperial residence, or from these airy heights above the town. To the palace was displayed the long perspective of the city architecture outlined against the blue bay—the massive cross-walls cleaving the crowded quarters, the domes of the churches glancing in the brilliant sunlight, and, interspersed, quiet respites of shade and leafiness, where some portico with frescoed walls and row of marble pillars recalled the habits of the classical age. From the higher standpoint of the race-course all the rich detail of this scene was blended and subdued; the eye would follow the long line of parapets and towers descending by the side of the sinuous streak of verdure which marked the course of the western ravine. The palace windows, which still rise above the head of that ravine, commanded the landscape of the west, the wide bay with its peaceful setting of cultivated hillsides stretching seawards to the distant cape.

Among the most pleasing and, perhaps, not the least striking feature in the composition of these scenes must at all times have been the luxuriance and variety of the vegetation which is natural to this soil. The necessary moisture is provided, not by stagnant pools and marshes, as in the country watered by the Kolchian rivers further east, but by salubrious springs, bubbling from the surface of the rock and collecting in rustling streams. The sun is indeed the fiery orb of Eastern landscapes; but the climate is tempered by the chilling winds from across the sea, bringing rain and mist in their train. The outcome of these conditions is the simultaneous exuberance of the trees and plants which flourish upon the coasts of the Mediterranean and of the leafy giants of our Northern woods; side by side with shady thickets of chestnut, elm, oak and hazel, groves of cypress, laurel and olive grace the shore. The wild vine hangs in festoons from the branches, and in sheltered places the orange tree, the lemon, and the pomegranate thrive and yield their fruit. All our fruits are found in the well-stocked gardens, while the fig of Trebizond is of old as famous as the grapes of Tripoli and the cherry of Kerasun. Cucumbers are cultivated, and heavy pumpkins, and tobacco, and Indian corn, with its reed-like stalks and luscious leaves. The beautiful pink flowers of the oleander may be seen rising above some orchard wall. In the middle of the seventeenth century we are told of upwards of thirty thousand gardens and vineyards inscribed in the city registers, and at that time the slopes about Boz Tepe were

completely covered with vines. But it is on the western rather than on the eastern side of the fortress that Nature has most freely lavished her gifts; and on no spot with more abundance or greater effectiveness than on the western ravine. The beauties of that valley, almost as we see them to-day, have been described in glowing language by Cardinal Bessarion in the fifteenth century, himself a son of Trebizond, and by the historian of the Comnenian empire whose warm imagination was kindled by scenes which recalled and intensified the graces of his native Tyrol.[1] A path leads down from the suburb on the west into the shade and freshness of the gorge, through thickets of lofty forest-trees, their leafy branches laced together by wild vines. Even at mid-day, when the sun hangs cloudless over the narrow vista, the rays scarcely penetrate to the deep shadows of the evergreens—a luxuriant undergrowth of myrtle, laurel and ivy, rising from the floor and up the cliffs. From the highest point of the castle rock some 150 feet above you, amongst a wild confusion of creepers and trees, the bold wall of the palace, now reduced to an empty skeleton, still stands up against the sky; and the broad windows which once opened from the emperor's apartments still overlook the verdant scene below. Past mossy banks, upon which the iris and primrose flourish, through leafy brakes, where trees of laurel hide the ground, the little stream cascades into the laps of the hollows or plashes over ledges of hard rock.

But we are anticipating on our walk, which has not yet brought us further than the edge of the eastern ravine. We cross the bridge, and at once find ourselves within the fortified enclosure, which is traversed by a broad road. Following that road, we are passing through the middle fortress—that part of the site which constituted the inhabited quarter of the walled city in its original form. Now as in ancient times it is crowded by buildings, while a considerable portion is taken up by the **Serai**, or Government House (No. 17 on plan of Trebizond and surroundings), which is situated about in the middle of the space between the ravines, on the south side of our road. Here the pasha will be sitting within an inner room, a bundle of papers by his side on the divan. Entering the court, you have on one side this palace, thronged with applicants, and, on the other, the iron gratings of a prison, banding the faces of the captives as they stare on the scene below. Past the gateway of the *Serai*, a narrow way leads up the enclosure, diverging at right angles from the road which joins the ravines. It conducts us to the upper fortress through a quarter

[1] J. P. Fallmerayer, born in 1790, the son of humble parents, whose flocks he tended on the mountain-sides as a boy. Died in 1861; a great scholar, a great writer, whose work has not yet received all the recognition which it deserves.

filled by private houses, and inhabited exclusively by Mohammedans. A walk of some two or three hundred yards brings us to the foot of the lofty cross-wall, which is almost as fresh to-day as when it was reared. By a steep incline we enter a gateway into a hollow tower adjoining the outer wall on the east, which constitutes the only passage into the citadel.

The massive ancient gate still rests upon its hinges, its rusty iron plates riddled with bullets. A second gate, placed at right angles to the first in the further wall, gives issue from the tower. The citadel, like the middle fortress, is occupied by modern houses; but they are less frequent, and are almost confined to the spaces immediately neighbouring the cross-wall. There is some difficulty in examining the extensive ancient works which still in part remain upon the site. One of the principal buildings is occupied by military stores, and is forbidden ground. I contrive to effect an entrance, and find it quite empty—a palpable reason for such exclusive measures. Then the walls which enclose the gardens of the private dwellings are no less the discreet protectors of the life of the harem than the veil to hide the squalor of faded opulence. While one of us is taking readings with the prismatic compass, the whole quarter is raised by the protestations of a young minx, who will insist that *she* is the object of his unmannerly stares. I have said that the palace is now a mere skeleton; a rambling old house, with a picturesque overhanging roof, fills a portion of the ground plan of the royal apartments, where they overlooked the western ravine. We are tardily given admission by a female voice. From an embrasure in the massive wall of the fortress, just below the row of eight arched windows, which stand up blank against the sky, we feast our eyes upon the charming view over the western ravine, following its sinuous outline into the background of leafy hills, or resting upon the cypresses and minaret of the Khatunieh mosque among the villas on the opposite margin of the abyss.

Within this outer wall, a little south of our standpoint, a square tower rises above the outline of the battlements, displaying in its upper storey the interior of a spacious apartment with windows opening upon the landscape. The fragment of a wall juts out towards us from beside the tower; and three large windows, of which two are double, with slim dividing pillars, have been spared to it by the ravages of time. Just north of us, three more windows rise from the outer wall, on a higher plane than those above our heads. Both rows are but the remains of much longer series, once the life and pride of these grim parapets. They enable us to reconstruct the ancient splendour of the imperial residence, which, day by day, is slowly passing towards the world of unsubstantial memories, to share the fate of sacred Troy and of King Priam, rich in flocks.

Above the palace, within the narrowing tongue of the circumvallation, the space is occupied by the substructures of the keep, over which we clamber to the parapets of the outer wall. Beside us, the square tower at the extreme end of the fortress frowns out upon the knife-like ridge between the ravines. It is probable that this tower is composed of a solid mass, for one cannot trace any sign of a passage in. The battlements of the wall rise to a height of nearly 200 feet above the western

ravine. Just on the east of the tower is placed the only entrance to the citadel from the side of the ridge. It consists of a long passage, flanked by a parallel outer wall, and abutting on a huge angular tower. But the inner doorway is now walled up, and one is obliged to retrace one's steps to the middle fortress, in order to pass without the walls.

The gate is situated just below the entrance to the citadel, in the wall on the east. It too is furnished with double doors, which, like their neighbours, have been riddled by musket fire. South of this gateway there is just enough room between the wall and the edge of the eastern ravine to permit of a narrow road. Leaving the interior of the fortress, one is taken along this road, with the wooded precipice on one hand and on the other the ivy-grown battlements. Peasants, carrying baskets, pass by on their way to market; and beneath a fig tree, teeming with fruit, some Mussulman women, resting from their wayfaring, cower within their veils as we approach. The colossal angular tower projects from the head of the irregular wall towards the leafy abyss, a large inscription gleaming white upon the wall which faces us, the record of the conquest of Mohammed II.

But the point at which you pause is at the head of the fortification, beneath the soaring escarpment of the square tower. It is the same site upon which the peoples from the remote recesses of Asia have stood with the lust of conquest in their eyes. On the opposite bank of the eastern ravine the drum-shaped dome of St. Eugenius rises from among a cluster of red-roofed villas. It was there that the Seljuk sultan issued his threats and insults, while the Greek emperor fasted and prayed. From within the limits of that same sanctuary were heard the shouts of the revellers, mingling with the voices of their concubines. And a white minaret proclaims the event of the long and unequal struggle between the full-blooded followers of the Prophet and the emaciated children of the Cross.

The tower itself has evidently been built at a later period than the wall from which it rises in a continuous face. The colour of the stone is slightly paler, and an inscription, now much decayed, attests it to be the work of the Emperor John the Fourth, the last but one of the Comnenian dynasty. The ground widens like a fan from the foot of this tower, and the ravines, which have almost met, diverge and become great valleys, stretching into the bosom of the hills. Within that ampler space, a few hundred yards south of the fortress, one may still recognise the enclosure of the hippodrome and the great gateway on its northern side. The wall still rises in places to a height of from six to ten feet, but all the interior structures have disappeared. A field of tobacco grows upon the site. Adjoining the gateway, and facing the palace, one is impressed by the shape and appearance of a projecting tongue of land with a flat top. The theatre may once have stood upon this spot.

The ancient churches of Trebizond, some converted into mosques and others into public baths, are among the most interesting relics which the town contains. Retracing our steps to the middle fortress and to the road which joins the two ravines, we have almost reached the bridge over the

westerly depression before attaining the old cathedral, sacred to the golden-headed Virgin, of which the southern wall borders our road on the north (No. 18). How bare and bleak it looks, shorn of its southern and western porches, and covered with a thick coating of whitewash! A little court, paved with flagstones, adjoins it on the east, over which you pass to an entrance at the north-east corner which has destroyed the side apse on that side. If you scrutinise the outer wall of the principal apse, you may still distinguish beneath the whitewash a design of figures in mosaic, one of which perhaps represents the seated Virgin. Time has worn down the few sculptured mouldings of which any trace remains. There is little to attract the eye in this mangled group of gables, surmounted by the drum of a duodecagonal dome. On the northern side rises the minaret, adjoining the principal entrance which has made use of the old porch on the north. Four marble pillars with Ionic capitals, probably the spoil of some pagan temple, support the roof of this spacious porch. We are about to enter, when we are called aside to observe an old fountain in the court on the east. It contains a marble slab with a Greek inscription, which is illegible; and the water issues from a much-worn bronze spout, representing the head of a serpent or dragon, which is said to have belonged to a bronze model of such a monster, killed by the spear of Alexius the First. Near the fountain is a tomb, still maintained in good order, in which repose the remains of a shepherd youth to whom the townspeople attribute the capture of the fortress by the Ottoman Turks. The story runs that Mohammed the Second, foiled by the strength of the citadel, had recourse to a final expedient of which the result should determine the alternatives of further effort or abandonment of the siege. A number of shots were to be fired from a cannon at the chain which supported the drawbridge. Should it be severed, it would be a signal for a renewal of operations; in the contrary case the siege was to be raised. The experiment failed; the sultan broke up his camp and removed the bulk of his army, leaving, however, the loaded cannon still in site. A young shepherd, happening to pass by, was prompted by the hardihood of his years to try his skill at the difficult mark. He discharged the gun, and the drawbridge fell. This child of a short-lived future sped to the camp of Mohammed, who was making his way up the valley of the Pyxitis towards Baiburt. But his story was derided, and the sultan, in a fit of anger, caused him to be killed. The rage of the despot was turned to grief when the confirmation reached him of this miraculous exploit. His return was followed by the fall of the city; and he endeavoured to atone for his rash action by loading his victim with posthumous rewards. Over the coffin one may still see the ball suspended which decided the fate of Trebizond. And the martyr is known by a name which repeats the sultan's sorrowful exclamation: "*Khosh Oghlan*," or "Well done! Oghlan."

The interior of the mosque produces an effect of extraordinary massiveness, with its bulky piers supporting the dome, with the walls which join these piers to the walls of the church and screen off the aisles from the open space beneath the dome. Except for the two inner columns of the porch, not a single pillar is to be seen. The aisles are narrow, and

their ceilings low; they are surmounted by a gallery, from which you look through low, arched apertures into the nave. The Turks have placed a wooden stage in the northern arm of the church, between the two walls which screen off the aisle. This erection faces their altar, and is reserved for their women; you reach it by a staircase placed inside the building, in front of the north-east entrance. A doorway leads from this wooden structure into the old gallery over the aisle, through which you pass to the women's gallery in the original design, which fills the space above the ceilings of the narthex and exo-narthex on the western side of the mosque. Two lofty vaulted openings display the interior to this gallery; while the wall between narthex and exo-narthex is pierced by three arches in a similar style. The door on the west in the storey below, which in Christian times gave access through these outer spaces into the body of the church, is no longer used, now that the religious focus of the building has been changed from the apse to the southern arm between the aisles. The exo-narthex has a width of 18 feet, and the narthex of 9 feet 7 inches. The piers upon which repose the vaulted ceilings of these courts are of such thickness that the entire space, measured from the inner side of the outer wall to the outer side of the wall of the nave, amounts to 37 feet 5 inches. The interior measurements of the church proper are a length of 93 feet 6 inches from the commencement of the nave to the head of the apse, and a breadth of only 50 feet 5 inches. It is well lit from windows in the apse and along the walls; but the twelve windows in the dome are small. Beautiful marble plaques of various colours, and designs in mosaic, may still be admired in the apse; but there is an almost total lack of ornament elsewhere. As to the date of the building, it is ascribed by Texier to the Grand-Comneni; with much less knowledge I hesitate to offer the opinion that the design belongs to an earlier period.

From this mosque of the middle fortress, *Orta Hisar Jamisi*, the ancient cathedral, it is but a few steps to the bridge over the western ravine. Like its fellow on the east of the enclosure, it consists of a lofty stone embankment, with a single narrow arch through which the stream flows. The prospect on either side is of great beauty, while the deep shadows of the vegetation, rising from the floor of the ravine, rest the eye and refresh the sense. Towards the south, beyond an irregular line of ivy-grown parapets, and towers of varying features and size, the stately works of palace and citadel rise against the sky; while in the direction of the sea, where the depression flattens and is lost in a maze of houses, the tiers of red-tiled roofs are pierced by a double series of battlements and embowered forts. The wall of the middle fortress is seen extending for some distance along the uneven edge of its rocky support; but it is over-powered in the landscape by the outer line of walls, which, starting from the opposite side of the ravine, are drawn in a long perspective to the shore.

Our goal is now the famous church of Hagia Sophia; it is situated upon the coast on the west of the city, at a distance of over a mile from the walls (No. 25). The bridge leads over into the western suburb, and for a short space you follow the outer wall of the lower fortress, stretching

westwards at right angles to the ravine. On the right hand this solid masonry and a massive rectangular tower; on the left, a little further on, the cypresses of the Turkish burying-field, the leaning white headstones with their gilt Arabic inscriptions better disposed and tended than is usually the case. We have passed the street which turns upwards to the **mosque Khatunieh** (No. 20), the spacious and still well-ordered mosque and *medresseh* which keeps alive the memory of the mother of Selim the First. Like the middle and lower fortress, this **western suburb** is inhabited for the most part by Mohammedans—what a contrast to the bustling town on the east of the city where the Christian quarters lie! There, busy streets, lined with the broad-paned windows of offices and shops; here, the silent graveyard and widely scattered dwellings which seem to shrink from contact with life. A brighter aspect belongs to the **meidan** or open place, to which we pass and which we cross (*Kavak Meidan*, or plane tree square)—an extensive stretch of green turf, resembling an English common, where in old times the *jerid* or spear exercise was performed. Several tombs (*kumbets*) are to be seen on this grassy lawn, but I do not know to whom they have been raised. A little later we have left the last settlements behind us, and are winding outwards towards the sea-shore.

The church of **Hagia Sophia**, or the Divine Wisdom, now converted into a mosque, has been described as one of the most interesting monuments of Byzantine architecture, sculpture, and painting that time has spared.[1] This appreciation can only be partially tested by the traveller of the present day, because the frescos which once covered the interior of the building have been daubed over with successive coats of whitewash. It is possible that when the time comes for restoring the building to Christian worship, or at least, as we may hope, for preserving it as a relic to instruct an enlightened age, the scales may fall away and disclose in some of their ancient brightness the solemn faces and gorgeous robes of the Grand-Comneni as they looked down upon the congregation of monks and pilgrims six centuries ago. In the meanwhile we may consult those descriptions of the paintings which have come down to us in the accounts of modern travellers more fortunate than ourselves, for at some periods a portion of the plaster has fallen and revealed the rich work below. Of the sculpture and architectural merits we are able to judge on the spot, for, although the Turks have introduced some alterations in the structure, they are too clumsy to mislead.

The first view of the building, high-seated on the left hand where the road debouches upon the sands, at once exhibits the beauties which are peculiar to it: the choice of site and the skilful grouping of the component parts (Fig. 3). A broad terrace or esplanade, which is partly natural and in part supported by an embankment and a wall, forms the summit of a gentle slope which rises from the water beyond a fringe of cactus and leafy shrubs. The surface of the platform is flat and even, and is covered by a green carpet of turf. The prospect ranges wide across the bay to Cape Ieros, and seawards without limit over the waves. On the east,

[1] Finlay, *Mediæval Greece and the Empire of Trebizond*, Oxford, 1877, p. 340.

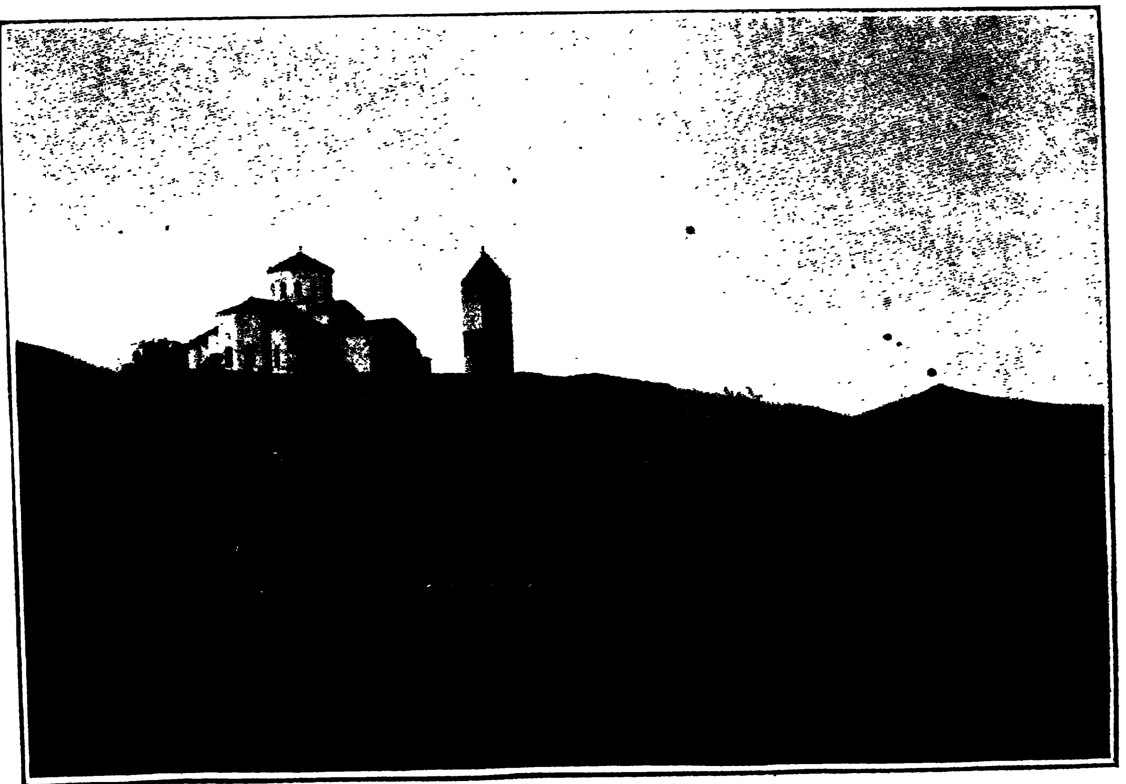


Fig. 3. Trebizond: Hagia Sophia.



Fig. 4. Trebizond: Façade of Hagia Sophia on the South.

rising ground shuts out the city and the suburb, while on the south, the open landscape of hill and valley is felt rather than observed.

From the peaceful elevation of this pleasant terrace the well-preserved remains of an ancient monastery look down upon the shore. On the west, at the further extremity of the platform, a lofty square bell-tower or campanile stands out alone, like a sentinel, fronting the sea; just below it lies the church, a cluster of roofs and gables centring in a drum-shaped dome. Of the monastic buildings only one has been spared, a massive square edifice at the south-western corner of the platform, which is almost concealed by trees.

We mount the slope and reach the platform on the southern side, with the church between us and the blue waters of the bay. A custodian has been found in some hovel among the orchards, but no meaner object breaks the grassy surface of the terrace from which the building rises, the even masonry exposed from base to dome. Against the plain grey spaces of the walls which lie behind it, the rich façade of the southern entrance at once attracts the eye (Fig. 4). It consists of a porch or lateral structure, which once gave access to a door in the main wall of the church. Two graceful marble pillars with Corinthian capitals supported the façade; but the Turks have closed this entrance and walled up the columns, which are only visible from the inside. The new work does not rise much higher than the tops of the capitals, and the openings of the three arches which spring from the pillars have been filled with window glass. Of these, the central arch is slightly pointed, and those on either side are round. A pleasing feature of the design is the bold rounded arch which spans the porch from one wall to the other, and envelops the three lesser vaultings and their marble columns within a broad band of unsculptured stone. On the outer side, a narrow beading of grapes and vine-leaves accentuates the studied absence of all ornament upon the masonry of the span; and the keystone is enriched by the figure of the single-headed eagle of the Comneni, with open talons and wings outspread. The space of wall which is framed in this stately manner, and which is supported by the pillars of the façade, forms a panel or panels which are admirably adapted to receive that style of decorative treatment in which Byzantine art excelled. About in the centre, the space is broken by a quatrefoil window, above which, and on either side, plaques of varied mosaic have been inserted into the wall. Below the window, and from end to end, runs a frieze in low relief, surmounted by an inscription in Greek, "Have mercy upon me, save me from my sins, O succour me, Lord, God, Holy! Holy!" In the frieze may be discerned among the shapes of plants and trees, rendered with the highest skill and with much grace, human figures which indeed have suffered mutilation, but which, like corresponding works of the Romanesque style, appear deformed in size. Adam lies asleep among the foliage of the garden; a serpent, coiled round a leafless trunk, confronts the standing figure of Eve. Of the mosaics two at least of the plaques have been removed or have perished; you see the vacant oblong spaces on either side of the quatrefoil. The largest panels contain geometrical patterns; but the most beautiful and best preserved, if perhaps

the smallest, is composed of two doves and two sprays of pomegranate in white on a black ground. This plaque has been placed just above the window and below the talons of the royal bird.

The reader will have divined that the great charm of this façade lies as much in the skill of the design—the wide span of the arch above the lesser arches, and the pleasing combination of these forms with the vertical lines of walls and columns, and with the sharp angle of the roof—as in the decorative effect of delicate mouldings and elaborate sculptures, and of rich mosaics thrown on the grey stone. Porches of similar plan give access to the interior, both on the western and northern sides; but their tympana or panels are without ornament. The western porch has an Arab niche with a deep honeycomb moulding from which the outer arch springs, and this moulding is continued in the form of imposts above the capitals of the columns. That on the north is without any remarkable feature, except that the capitals, which are of fresh white marble, appear to be of much later date. They are without carving, but in each is cut a panel, bearing the figure of a Latin cross.

A walk round the building confirms the impression which a first view produced. It is the number of roofs at various levels, the different grouping of the gables at every turn, that arrests and pleases the eye. The walls themselves are of hewn stone, with plain mouldings, of which the most delicate runs round the apse and side chapels, above the windows, in a continuous band. On the face of the apse itself you see the eagle of the Grand-Comneni, set in panel in the wall.

The entrance to the mosque is through the porch on the west. It is much shorter or less deep than its two counterparts, but, unlike them, gives access through a marble doorway to a second vestibule or outer court. This court or narthex extends the whole width of the building, and is both lofty and well lit. A door opens from it into the church proper, an airy interior of pleasing proportions, into which the light streams from the twelve windows in the circumference of the dome (Fig. 5). Four massive marble pillars with carved Byzantine capitals support the pendentives from which the dome springs; but the sharpness of the sculpture has been obliterated by thick coats of buff and green paint. The Turks have also introduced some structural changes. The southern porch has been thrown into the body of the building, and an altar (*mihrab*) placed between the two columns which properly belong to the façade. In this manner the porch, with its orientation towards Mecca, has become the religious focus of the mosque; a wooden gallery, from which my illustration was taken, has been erected against the opposite wall. The apse, which is lit by three windows, is supplemented by two smaller apses or side chapels at the extremities of the aisles.

Like most of the ancient churches we are about to visit during the course of our journey south, Hagia Sophia is a building of small dimensions according to modern ideas. The interior has a length of not more than 69 feet from the inner door to the head of the apse, with a breadth, excluding the side porches, of 36 feet. A building of this size is admirably adapted to the art of the painter in fresco, while his work

derives the greatest possible advantage from the features of the design. The lofty vaulted spaces of the dome and apse were once resplendent with bright effects; and on the walls were depicted the richly-apparelled figures of the princes of the Comnenian line. From the partial glimpses of the paintings obtained by various travellers, it is possible to realise, at least in some measure, the former splendour of the scene. At the entrance above the door was seen the image of Alexius, first emperor of Trebizond, surrounded by his court, like Justinian at Ravenna; in his hands the golden globe of empire, and on his forehead a white diadem. On the right of the same door stood the first Manuel (r. A.D. 1238-63), the prince who was known as "the great captain," and who, according to

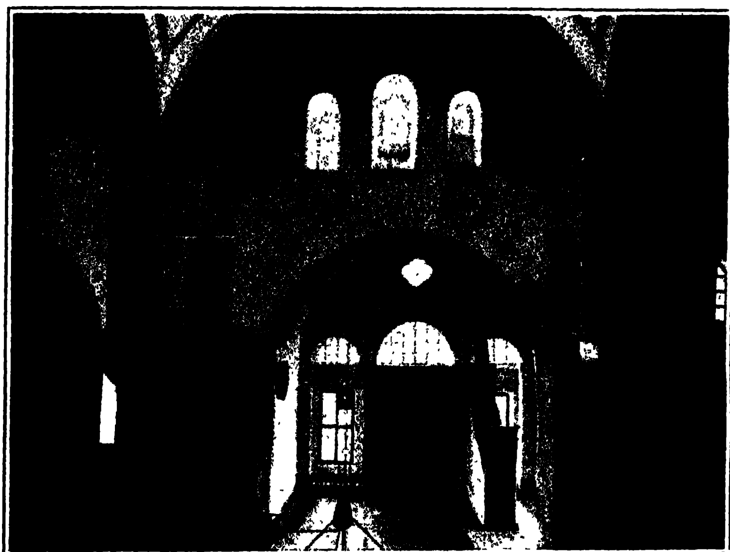


FIG. 5. INTERIOR OF HAGIA SOPHIA.

the description at the side of the figure, was the founder of this monastery. The emperor was without crown, but his forehead was encircled by a cinglet with a double row of pearls. The front of the royal robe was adorned on either side by a band of large circular medallions, bearing the device of the single-headed eagle; a similar ornament, engraved with the equestrian figure of St. Eugenius, hung upon the royal breast. Many of the successors of these two princes were without doubt represented on the remaining spaces of the walls; while the portraits included those of saints and evangelists, all attired in costliest style. The apse displayed a group of three figures, of whom the central one appears to have designated St. Paul; on his right hand St. James and on his left St. John were identified by written scrolls. From the inner sides of the arches, as from the vault of heaven, the faces of angels looked down. The floor was paved by a rich marqueterie of marbles; you admired in particular a design of

geometrical character in which the tracing was done in black marble on a ground of vivid reds and pinks and greens.

But the impression which we should take away from this elaborate interior would be one of sadness, perhaps of pain. The art, the life, here represented, was an art in shackles, an expiring phase of life. The peculiar wooden quality of these expressionless faces may be gauged by the examples which have been preserved for us by the care of Texier. Strict conventions had taken the place of realities alike in life and in art; and how sad after the unsurpassed beauty of Hellenic vigour are the gaudy get-up and childish love of baubles which mark the declining years of the Greek world! Vanished, or hidden from sight behind the inexorable whitewash, lies the vivid evidence of that departed age; repugnant alike to the spirit and to the mission of Mohammedanism, this rich collection of Christian images must, from the first, have courted effacement. At the time of our visit the walls had been recently limed over to purify the edifice after the service of State prison to which, during the prevalence of cholera in the town, it had been temporarily assigned. In the upper storey of the campanile, a later work of the fifteenth century, the frescos are still exposed; but it is evident that they can never have possessed much importance. The baptistery, which is said to have been covered with such paintings, has been removed many years ago. It stood near the edge of the terrace, on the north.

Before retracing our steps towards the city, it is worth while to extend the excursion to the neighbouring ruin of **Mevla Khaneh** (House of gods, No. 23), if only for the sake of a ramble through the pleasant country lanes and a view over the peaceful landscape of the bay. Against the background of the line of heights, at a distance from Hagia Sophia of about three-quarters of a mile, the scanty remains of a heathen temple emerge from a leafy brake which fills a recess of the hillside. Portions of a tower and doorway, the lower parts of two walls have escaped the ravages of time. Small square niches are seen in the walls at close intervals, said to have contained the statues of the gods. From the floor of the temple rise tall elm trees, festooned with wild vine; and an ancient laurel tree bends over the ivy-grown masonry. Rarely do people pass this way; and, on the occasion of our visit, we were the unwilling authors of a rather serious offence. Among the lanes below the ruin we surprised a young woman, combing her long hair on the margin of a stream from which she had just stepped out.

One may return to Trebizond by the old road towards Platana, which has been replaced by a new *chaussée* nearer the shore. From the Kavak Meidan, with its one fine plane tree, we proceed through the quarter of Sotke towards the gate of the same name in the wall of the lower fortress. The **riparian quarters** on the east of the city are well worthy of a visit; they may be reached either by crossing the crowded spaces of the fortified enclosure, or by making the more pleasant circuit by the side of the sea. Choosing the second alternative, we soon arrive at the angle of the wall, and are treading the broad strip of sand. All the elements of the picturesque are present in the varied scene—the line of walls, the massive

tower just on the east of the gate of Molos, the broad-prowed ships drawn up on the shore, the groups of people in motley attire. In the autumn large quantities of nuts are spread out on the sand, awaiting shipment to France. The tower is flanked on the west by the parapet of a modern battery, while on the east it is adjoined by the vault through which the stream issues which comes from the western ravine. In front of the vault there is a little bridge. The submerged remains of a semicircular mole—a work of the old Greek times—are indicated by a line of surf in the sea. It is evident that the entrance to this harbour was on the east. On that side too there is a tower, projecting into the waves with the form of a wedge, and still joined to the north-eastern angle of the fortress by the substructures of a massive wall.

It is through an opening in that wall that we pass from the life of the sea-shore into the more intense and throbbing life of the **bazar.** In old times one of the great gates gave issue from the lower fortress to the important riparian quarters on the east. This gate, the bazar gate or gate of *Mumkhaneh* (candle factories), has been removed to give space to a broad street. The stream from the eastern ravine, which passes outside the walls, is taken by a tunnel through this crowded quarter. The bazars adjoin the fortress; they are well stocked and extensive. The more one walks in Trebizond, the more one is impressed by the shyness of the women; nowhere in the East have I seen them more ashamed to show the face. Nowhere does one realise more keenly the loss of colour and gaiety which this muffling and veiling of women entails. A fine example of an old Italian magazine may be seen in this neighbourhood; it is called the **Bezestan** (repository of stuffs, No. 16). Where the bazar is at its busiest, a massive square building of stone and brick rises above the lines of booths with their shadowed recesses. It is entered by four doors, of wood plated with iron, one on each side. In the centre is a well; the roof rested on four piers and sprung from vaultings at each angle of the square. The piers and vaultings still remain, but the roof is gone. The place is occupied by sellers of quilts, or coverlets stuffed with cotton, which take the place of blankets in the East.

South of this building, beyond the large mosque of the quarter, which is without architectural interest, are situated the two Greek churches of Aivasil and Aiana, the first almost on the fringe of the bazars. **Aivasil** (No. 14) has been rebuilt, or rather the site of the old church has been covered by a modern and tasteless erection. But a long stone, part of a frieze, containing an inscription of Justinian, which belonged to the earlier edifice, is still preserved as an historical relic in the body of the church. **Aiana** (No. 13), its close neighbour, is, on the other hand, quite intact, and remains a most interesting example of the beginnings of Christian architecture. A small and unpretentious building of stone, not too evenly put together, with the arches over the little windows constructed of brick, it would almost escape notice were it not for a large bas-relief in marble which is inserted into the wall over the door on the south. Although the stone is cracked and the sculpture has suffered mutilation, one can recognise that there is represented a colossal seated

figure, with a smaller figure, holding a shield, at her feet. The interior is built of brick, and consists of a nave and two aisles, the principal apse being flanked by two side apses.[1] But there is no dome; and the scanty light which falls on the withered frescos comes from nine little windows in the walls. Each aisle has two arches, the more easterly pair resting on piers, and the more westerly on marble pillars with Ionic capitals. One remarks the narrowness of the apse, in which is placed a primitive altar, resembling those in the oldest Armenian churches. It consists of a horizontal slab resting on a circular stone, and on the side of the slab is a Greek inscription. Several of the frescos remain with which the walls were once covered, the building being still used as a church. Besides Biblical subjects, one observes several portraits upon the wall on the west. The greater portion of the space is filled with the pictures of saints and monks; but on the north side there is represented a colossal figure, of which the head has unfortunately been effaced. The figure is attired in a purple robe, with bands of gold embroidered in black, the same costume as that in which the Emperor Alexius III. is depicted in the Bull at Sumelas. He holds a circular ornament or emblem in his left hand. An inscription, partially effaced, is seen on the wall below the figure.[2] Such is this relic of the early city, with its spoils of still earlier temples, bridging the periods of the old worship and the new.

Returning to the commercial quarter from the narrow alleys which surround this building, we pass an old house which is an example of a style of architecture now rapidly being replaced by the modern villa. The exterior, with its projecting upper storey and semicircular, roofed balcony, where the inmates would enjoy the freshness of the afternoon, produces an impression at once of somewhat costly solidity and of picturesque charm. The rooms are panelled in wood, both walls and ceilings; and screens of open woodwork, placed before the windows, preserve the privacy of the life within. In the little niches and in the details of the ornamentation the spirit is that of Persian art.

The magazines of the merchants are situated along the shore between the fortified city and the point of *Güzel Serai*. Proceeding eastwards, we need scarcely stop to visit the **Greek cathedral** (No. 12), a large modern building of extraordinary ugliness on the margin of the sea. On the south side of this pretentious church we are shown the tomb of the last of the Georgian kings. A road leads upwards through the crowded Christian quarter, *Frank Mahalla*, past the wall and tower of **Güzel Serai** (No. 10).

[1] The dimensions of the interior are: length to head of apse, 33 feet; breadth, 21 feet 7 inches.

[2] The ornament is as follows: 

The inscription is: **Δ. Ḣ. IGƷλƴȣΘΥGA**
T. . KA.

I notice that M. Gabriel Millet identifies this figure as a Saint Michael (*op. infra cit.* p. 436).

These buildings date, I believe, from a comparatively recent period; but they occupy the site of the famous fortress of **Leontocastron**, long in dispute between the Comnenian emperor and the Genoese. The companion fort of **Daphnus**, another Genoese possession, probably stood in the bay on the west, where the quarter of *Dia Funda*, an Italian corruption of the Greek name, faces the modern anchorage. The walls of *Güzel Serai* overlook a park of artillery, drawn up on a grassy platform at the point.

Our walk through the eastern suburb may be protracted to the slope of Boz Tepe, where an ancient nunnery, famous for its frescos, commands the landscape of the city from a well-chosen site just outside its extreme fringe (No. 6). Adjacent to the building, which presents the appearance of a fortress, was placed the summer residence or pleasure-house whence the Grand-Comneni used to survey their beauteous capital. I can well remember the ruin of this palace, with its blank windows, such a pleasant frame to the charming view which they overlooked. Alas! this fragment has disappeared, to make room for an ugly guest-house which the avaricious nuns have built in its place. The chapel of the nunnery, dedicated to the Virgin, **Panagia Theoskepastos**, is built into the side of the cliff, its inner end being, in fact, a cave. Damp has blurred the frescos; but one may still recognise the royal portraits upon the north wall. The upper portions of two kingly figures, attired in purple robes, and on their right hand, side by side, two queens with jewelled crowns, still colour the mouldy side of the cave, and are almost hidden by a row of stalls. They have been identified by inscriptions which, I presume, have become effaced, as Alexius III. and his queen Theodora; as Andronicus and Eirene, mother respectively and son of the first-named prince.

Nor should the traveller omit a visit to the church of **St. Eugenius** (No. 19), although he may not have time to visit the grottos in the face of Boz Tepe, and to protract the excursion beyond the embouchure of the Pyxitis to the site of Xenophon's camp. That famous church is situated in the opposite direction, and has been already mentioned in the description of the upper fortress. It stands on the margin of the eastern ravine, almost opposite to the great polygonal tower. The site is separated from the slopes of Boz Tepe by a second and smaller ravine, which shows remains, on the western bank, of walls and towers. Houses cluster round the building, their horizontal outlines topped by its gables and crowned by its polygonal, drum-shaped dome. St. Eugenius dates from the period of the Grand-Comneni; but the frescos on the western wall, which some travellers have noticed, are now nothing more than patches of colour. It is a somewhat larger edifice than Hagia Sophia, which, although less graceful, it resembles in some respects. The dome rests upon two fluted columns on the west side, while, on the east, it is supported by piers. A flood of light fills the interior, which is plain and bare, the church having been converted to the service of Islam by the Ottoman conqueror. It was here that Mohammed II. is said to have worshipped on the first Friday after the capture of the city by his troops. The event is commemorated by the name of New Friday (*Yeni Juma*), under which the mosque is known.

One is fortunate if it be possible to spend the later afternoons of days devoted to the study of the town among the restful surroundings of the pleasant country-side, upon the slopes of the adjacent hills. Such was my privilege in 1898. Our tents were pitched on the lofty plateau north-west of the city, the view ranging on the one side to the rocky cliffs of Boz Tepe, and, on the other, to the distant promontory of the sacred mountain. The crowded impressions of the day would take proportion and perspective. One saw a city which, in spite of the modern aspect of certain quarters, has lost little of the romance of the Middle Age. The earlier imprint upon its buildings is that of the era of Justinian;[1] their actual appearance is due to the Grand-Comneni; a great sleep has bridged the interval to the present time. Yet the life of the place, such as it is, pursues the old channels, and the throng in the streets is to-day not less heterogeneous than it was four centuries ago. The French, the Austrians, and the Russians conduct the carrying trade with Europe, reviving the function of the Genoese. The wares they bring are largely of British origin, and are largely imported by British merchants trading in Persia. Strings of Bactrian camels may be seen in the streets, about to start on the long stages which separate the seaport from Erzerum and Tabriz. The various peoples of Asia and of Europe still meet in the bazars.[2] But the romance of the city can never have equalled the romance of her surroundings, Nature being the subtlest weaver of mysteries, the mother with unending fables in whom the romantic spirit finds the only wholesome refuge from the dull realities of daily life. The most permanent memory which the traveller may take away from his visit may be the fruit of those half-hours between daylight and night which he spends in his encampment above the town. When once the sun has set there ensues a period of twilight, in which the glow of the south appears to be blended with the gorgeous effects of northern latitudes. Indeed, the view over the sea by day recalls the colouring on our English coasts; and the little silken Union Jack which fluttered over the tent of my companion, who was acting as consul, would often seem to wave on a field of its native blue. But in the evening there is produced a combination of elements, at once much softer and

[1] Bejeshkean (*op. infra cit.*) publishes the inscription of Justinian on the face of the old gateway of Tabakhaneh, which has now disappeared. It records the restoration of the public edifices of the city by that emperor. See also Hamilton, *op. infra cit.*

[2] The population of Trebizond at the present day is estimated at 45,000 souls.

much sterner than the setting of our English scenes. The spirit of Scythia, of the frozen North, meets the languid Mediterranean spirit, and spreads a robe of fire and paleness over the sea. Only the cypresses and the luxuriant foliage preserve the identity of the sinuous bays; and the succession of meridional ridges which feature the coast towards Cape Ieros are clothed with a forest of trees, fretting the splendour of the western sky.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

For the topography and antiquities of Trebizond I would refer the student who may be desirous of going more closely into the subject to the following works:—Ritter, *Erdkunde von Asien*, vol. xviii. pp. 852 *seq.*; and in particular to the following authorities, cited by Ritter, viz. *Travels of Evliya*, translated by von Hammer, London 1850, vol. ii. pp. 41 *seq.*; Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, Paris 1717, vol. ii. pp. 233 *seq.*; Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, etc.*, London 1842, vol. ii. appendix v. p. 409 (inscription No. 49, over the gateway); Fallmerayer, J. P., *Fragmente aus dem Orient*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1877, with which should be read the *Original-Fragmente* of the same author, published in the Abhandlungen of the Academy of Munich (Hist. Classe), vols. iii. and iv., 1843-44. Fallmerayer was the first to investigate the subject in an adequate manner; his descriptions are charmingly written; and, while I have availed myself freely in composing a part of this chapter of the results of his researches, I must also acknowledge having come under the spell of his personality (for a slight biography of the historian see Mitterrutzner, *Fragmente aus dem Leben des Fragmentisten*, Brixen 1887).

Among those who have advanced our knowledge of the place since Ritter wrote I would cite the following:—Texier, 1839, *Description de l'Arménie, etc.*, Paris 1842, two vols. folio, with plates (see also the magnificent work by Texier and Pullan, *L'Architecture Byzantine*, London 1864); Pfaffenhoffen, *Essai sur les aspres Comnénats ou blancs d'argent de Trébizonde*, Paris 1847; Finlay, *Mediæval Greece and the Empire of Trebizond* (vol. iv. of *History of Greece*, revised edition, Oxford 1877); Tozer, *Turkish Armenia*, London 1881, pp. 450 *seq.* I have also had access to a book in Armenian which was shown to me at Trebizond, and which is entitled: *History of Pontus*, by the Rev. Father Minas Bejeshkean (Mekhitarist), a native of Trebizond, Venice 1819.[1]

The plans which accompany this chapter were made at the close of my second journey by kind permission of the Turkish Government, and after I had already perused the accounts of my predecessors. There is

[1] Since writing this chapter two articles in the Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique (Paris) for 1895 have come to my notice. They are: G. Millet, *Les monastères et les églises de Trébizonde*, pp. 419-459; and J. Strzygowski, *Les chapiteaux de Sainte Sophie de Trébizonde*, pp. 517-522.

one point in connection with the topography which one would like to feel sure about, namely, upon what eminence in the neighbourhood the statue of Hadrian was set up. I fancy it must have been erected on the Karlik Tepe, a bold peak about four miles south of the town, commanding a magnificent view. A small chapel now stands upon the summit.

The history of the empire of the Grand-Comneni of Trebizond forms a most instructive episode in the immemorial struggle between the East and the West. It was Fallmerayer who may be said to have given this history as a new possession to knowledge in his admirable *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt*, Munich 1827, followed by the *Original-Fragmente*, cited above. These sources have been utilised by Finlay in his *History of Greece and Trebizond*; but it is to be regretted that Fallmerayer himself did not rewrite his *Geschichte* after his later discoveries of new and important material. The outline of the subject may, perhaps, be presented in the following brief notice.

The further one pursues one's studies of the countries west of India, whether in the camp or in the library, the larger looms the stately fabric of the Roman Empire of the East, and the more is felt the need of a work dealing comprehensively with this great subject. Our historians have allowed their interest to be absorbed by Europe; upon Asia and the rule of the Cæsars over some of the fairest portions of her vast territories for a period, which, commencing with the Roman Republic, may be said to extend down to the suppression of the despots of Trebizond by the Ottoman Turks in the latter half of the fifteenth century, they have scarcely bestowed more than an impatient glance. The period covers the bloom and fall of at least six great Asiatic dynasties—the Arsakids, Sasanians, Arab caliphs, Seljuk Turks, shahs of Kharizme, Tartar khans. It comes to an end among the ruins of Asiatic prosperity, when the Turkomans are pasturing their flocks among the débris of civilisation, and the Ottoman sultans, deriving their origin from a nomad Turkish tribe, are being carried to their zenith by the former subjects of the Cæsars, severed in the corps of Janissaries from their Western culture and Christian religion, and living only with the breath of their Mohammedan and Oriental king. This startling revolution in the political and economical condition of Asia, the effects of which are operative at the present day, may be traced back to the decisive blow which was struck at the Roman Empire of the East by the victory of the Seljuk sultan, Alp Arslan, over the Cæsar Romanus near Melazkert in Armenia in the year 1071. The three centuries of imperial rule in Asia which succeeded this event reveal few and spasmodic interruptions to the inclined plane of Western relapse. Then the darkness finally closes in; Constantinople falls (1453), and Western commerce is expelled from the Black Sea.

The empire of Trebizond takes its place in this great tragedy of history when the end is already in view. In the same year and the same month in which the Latins took Constantinople and the nobility of the imperial capital fled to the cities of Asia (April 1204), two youthful scions of the illustrious House of Comnenus appeared at the head of a body of Georgian mercenaries before the gates of Trebizond. The Comneni,

whose name perhaps reveals an Italian origin, emerge into the light of history in the latter part of the tenth century, from a private station among the Greek nobility of Asia, where their hereditary estate was situated near Kastamuni, a town in the interior, which one may reach at the present day by a carriageable road from the port of Ineboli on the Black Sea. Manuel Comnenus, the first to bring fame to the family, was prefect of all the East under the Cæsar, Basil the Second (in 976); and his son, the scholarly Isaac Comnenus, was chosen by his contemporaries to occupy the imperial throne. The nephew of Isaac, the Emperor Alexius Comnenus (r. 1081-1118), is well known for the part which he played during the crusading era; and he was followed on the Byzantine throne by two of the most martial figures of that age of heroes, Kalo-Joannes (r. 1118-43) and Manuel (r. 1143-80). Manuel was succeeded by his cousin Andronicus Comnenus (r. 1182-85), an emperor who did much to purify the corrupt provincial administration of the Byzantine monarchy, and who perished in a domestic revolution, due to his severe measures against the high nobility. The murder of this prince was followed at no long interval by the Latin conquest of the capital; and the two Comneni who came to Trebizond in 1204 were sons of Manuel, son and heir to Andronicus, who had also perished in the aforesaid revolution.

Their names were Alexius and David; and they were assisted in their enterprise by their paternal aunt, Thamar, the offspring of their grandfather and a Georgian lady. The political condition of Trebizond during the interval between the murder of Andronicus and the Latin conquest of the capital is not definitely known; but the Greek city was probably feeling the pressure of the neighbouring kingdom of Georgia at the time of the advent of the two Greek princes. The prospects of relief, on the one hand, from this pressure, and, on the other, from dependence upon the rotten court of Constantinople under the hopeful rule of an illustrious family, must have operated as powerful inducements to the townspeople to welcome the new régime. Alexius Comnenus is accepted as master of the city, and his rising fortunes attract to his victorious standard some of the noblest of the refugees from the capital, flying into Asia before the Latins. Others range themselves round the person of Theodore Laskaris in Bithynia; and two rival Greek or Roman empires are established upon Asiatic soil, that of Nicæa, or Nice, the capital of Bithynia, and the empire of Trebizond.

The successors of Laskaris fought their way back to Constantinople, which was recovered from the Latin barons in 1261. A much less splendid fate was reserved for the family of Alexius Comnenus; yet the little empire on the Black Sea survived the restored Byzantine Empire; and a space of nearly a hundred years separates the fall of the last of the Greek cities of the interior (conquest of Philadelphia by the Sultan Bayazid in 1390) from the overthrow of the rule of the Comneni at Trebizond (1461). During a period of over 250 years these petty Greek princes contrived to elude the storms of Mussulman conquest behind the wall of mountains interposed between the interior and the coast. Some-

times as vassals of the Oriental dynasties, at other times in a state of independence, they ruled over the beautiful city and a narrow strip of seaboard of varying extent. Their possessions even included a part of the Crimea, of which the tribute was conveyed across the expanse of waters in the imperial galleys. Proud of their pompous titles of Grand-Comneni and Emperors of the Romans, or lords of all Anatolia, Georgia, and the Transmarine, they supplied their deficiencies in real power by elaborate ceremonials, and substituted the gorgeous cult of their patron saint, Eugenius, for the devotional exercises of the Christian religion. They might be consigned without regret to the limbo of history, were it not for the cause of which they were the late and debased representatives, but which, nevertheless, they contributed to sustain. Their territory afforded a home and holding ground to commerce; and, when the land routes through Asia Minor fell into disuse owing to the increase of anarchy, Trebizond became an emporium of the trade with the further Asia, diverted to the more secure avenue of the Armenian plains. This trade was conducted with great spirit by the Genoese from their factories at Trebizond, until Grand-Comneni, Italian merchants, and all the apparatus of civilisation were swept away by the Ottoman sultan, Mohammed the Second (1451-81). This type of Oriental exclusiveness came marching across the mountains some years after his conquest of Constantinople (1453). The citadel of Trebizond was given over to the Janissaries, the palace to a pasha; the last of the Comneni was transported to an exile in Europe, whence, not long afterwards, he was summoned to the capital and commanded to abjure the Christian faith. The firmness of his refusal and the dignity of his martyrdom cast a parting ray of glory through the shadows which had already closed upon his House. His body and those of the princes who died with him were thrown to the dogs beyond the walls of Constantinople. Only one-third of the inhabitants of Trebizond, and these the dregs of the populace, were suffered to remain in their native city. The remainder were compelled to emigrate, and their estates were confiscated. In 1475 the policy of expulsion of all Western influences was crowned by the Ottoman occupation of Caffa and Tana, the more northerly depôts of the Genoese in the Black Sea. European ships were expelled from these waters; where trade was banished ensued barbarism; and for three centuries these shores were forgotten by the West. A new era found expression in the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), which secured the free navigation of this sea. The first steamer made her appearance in 1836, and since then commerce has steadily increased. It flows along the shore, to be distributed throughout the interior, until it reaches the solid barrier of the Russian frontier. It is carried across Asia just outside that barrier on the backs of camels and mules. On the far side of the wall is heard the whistle of the locomotive, and the rumble of a train which not a bale of the hated products of European industry is permitted to invade.

Let the progressive states of modern Europe take heed lest their domestic rivalries result in the conversion of the Black Sea into a Russian lake, and the re-establishment of the old and melancholy order.

CHAPTER II

ASCENT TO ARMENIA

IT had never been our intention to enter Armenia by the well-beaten avenue of Trebizond and Erzerum. The season was advanced; our first objective was Ararat; and it appeared doubtful whether, even with the utmost possible expedition, we should be able to accomplish the ascent of the mountain before the commencement of the winter snows. The attack is no doubt feasible from the side of Turkey; at least on two occasions it has been successful; but the journey is long from Erzerum to Bayazid, and the stages must be covered by your own horses; there is no posting system to furnish you with relays. Nor is it likely that you will find the same facilities at Bayazid that are offered in Russian territory, through the courtesy of the Russian Government, by the detachment of Cossacks which is stationed on the northern slopes. These considerations were decisive in determining us upon the approach from Georgia; but I was also anxious on other grounds to become acquainted with the Russian provinces of Armenia before investigating the condition of those under Turkish rule. With these purposes we rejoined our steamer on the night of the 16th of August and continued the voyage to Batum.

August 17.—From Trebizond to the Russian port is a run of a hundred miles; the early morning saw us skirting the redoubts that line the shore and doubling the little promontory on which the lighthouse stands. In the bight or tiny inlet that recedes from that low headland a depth of water of some thirty fathoms may be found; yet the bay as a whole is shallow and full of silt, and it is only on this western side, close in upon the land, that such soundings are obtained. The largest vessels may be seen brought up so near to the beach that their lofty sterns

almost overhang its shelving slopes. But the space is not extensive in this favoured quarter, and if this natural harbour is protected on the east by the wall of the coast range, it is exposed towards the north. The Russians have endeavoured to overcome these disadvantages by constructing a long breakwater of solid masonry, which projects from the side of the mountains into the bay; for years they have been engaged in dredging operations, but they have been hampered by the continual tendency of the anchorage to fill with sandy deposit along the eastern shore.

I should not trouble or divert my reader with a humble incident of travel, were it not that I am anxious to dispel the prevailing prejudices which attribute an unusual degree of severity to the service of the customs at this port. Some years ago, when returning from Persia to Europe, I had been summoned to the fearful presence of the presiding officers and had been amiably dismissed; but on that occasion I was invested with the more innocent character of an export, whereas now it was with the savoury attributes of imports from Great Britain that we were walking into the lion's mouth. Stories were abroad of ladies who had arrived in silken dresses and who had been seen to issue from the portals of this redoubtable Custom-House in whatever garments may have escaped the confiscation from their persons of the more valuable products of European looms. It was therefore with some apprehension and not without anxiety that we awaited the arrival of the inspector and his men. Their white caps and white tunics are soon in evidence on the ship's ladder; they step on deck, appear uncertain and desirous of information; then, after a cast or two, we see them settling to the line. In a remote corner of the deck, almost covered by the gigantic frame of Rudolph, lies a pile of miscellaneous but extremely creditable luggage, of which the hapless owners are ourselves. When the Swiss is interrogated he smiles blandly; the salute on their side is not less gracious and more effusive; then they leave the steamer and we are free. What is the incident? If you measure it by the paradoxical nature of the occurrence, it was more than an incident, it was an event. For the rest we were not slow to discover the explanation; there is not in Russia a more courteous official or kinder personality than the Director of Customs at Batum. M. de Klupffell is a veteran sportsman, and, as such, a friend of Englishmen; in my cousin he found an ardent votary of his own science and a companion

in its pursuit; and we were linked together by a number of pleasant memories before the day of departure hurried us apart.

Five valuable days, of which not a minute was vacant, were consumed in completing the preparations for our journey and in procuring a supplementary supply of letters of introduction to those in authority at the centres through which we should pass. We were about to enter a country which, both for strategical and political reasons, is hedged in with scarcely visible but extremely palpable restrictions, and for the unprepared and ill-recommended traveller is almost of the nature of forbidden ground. There are wide districts in which our consul at Batum is not permitted to travel; I am sure he would not venture to cross the threshold of Kars. To make certain of being allowed to move about without hindrance and to enjoy the luxury of the confidence that your presence will be tolerated and that you will not suddenly be summarily expelled, it is necessary to supply yourself with a special authorisation from the proper Minister at St. Petersburg. But our ambassador at the Russian capital refuses to put forward the application; he has made a rule which nothing will induce him to break through. At Constantinople our embassy is of course completely helpless; there remains the doubtful method of private approach. The days were swelling into weeks while we lingered on the Bosphorus; it was useless to proceed without some form of pass in our pockets, but the precious months of summer were gliding away. At length we were sufficiently provided with recommendations to be warranted in trusting fortune to do the rest; we owed much to the kindness of our Russian acquaintances at Constantinople, and we were able to realise a fact of which we subsequently received such abundant evidence, that the highest Russian officials are as a rule enlightened men of the world as well as the kindest and most hospitable of hosts.

On the side of Georgia there are two principal approaches to Armenia, and the traveller who desires to consult his comfort may be advised to restrict his choice to these two roads. The more westerly ascends the valley of the Kur river and reaches the highlands about Akhaltsykh by the romantic gorge and passage of Borjom; the other, further east, leaves the railway between the Black Sea and the Caspian at the station of Akstafa, some fifty miles below Tiflis, and, mounting from the trough of the Kur along the course of the Akstafa, issues upon the open country on

the west of Lake Sevan, near the posting-stage of Delijan.[1] A bifurcation at that point leads by one branch to Alexandropol and by the other to Erivan. You may ride in a victoria and with relays of post-horses on either of these roads. Both conduct you from the steppes at the southern foot of Caucasus and from levels that are comparatively low across or aslant the grain of the peripheral ranges to the edge of the Armenian tableland. Those ranges are the continuation upon the east of the mountains which we have followed from the Bosphorus to Batum ; they stand up like a wall from the flats of the Rion and from the plains which border the lower course of the Kur, with much the same appearance as we saw them rise with ever-increasing proportions along the floor of the Black Sea. Beyond those lowlands a mighty neighbour, the parallel chain of Caucasus, faces them on the north. Only at one point do these two great systems join hands together, in the belt of mountainous country which separates the watershed of the Kur from that of the Rion and which the railway crosses by the pass of Suram (about 3000 feet). This linking chain is known to geographers under the name of the Meschic or Moschic ; geologists are inclined to connect it with the structure of Caucasus ; our senses might invest it with a separate existence, a transverse barrier as it were, thrown from range to range across the hollow which extends from sea to sea.

I was disinclined for several reasons to traverse this barrier, so that we might avail ourselves of either of the main roads. Erivan was our destination, the railway and the valley of the Akstafa our readiest means of access ; but I was already familiar with the trough of the Kur between Tiflis and the Caspian, and I had read so many accounts of this approach to Armenia that the natural features of the several stages between the Georgian river and Lake Sevan seemed imprinted upon my mind. I was also anxious to gain some knowledge of the western portion of the tableland, of which I had only succeeded in obtaining from the literature of travel a wholly insufficient idea. To these districts the route by Borjom is at once the best-known avenue and that which combines with a lavish display of magnificent scenery the comforts of a beaten track. But to worm myself up the valley of the Kur to the Armenian highlands was, I thought, to miss an

[1] A railway, connecting the capital of Georgia, Tiflis, with Alexandropol and Kars, has been completed since the date of this journey. It winds its way up the valley of the Borchala.

occasion which might not subsequently be offered of realising at the outset of our long journey the essential features and characteristics of the country we had come to see. In Asia so vast is the scale upon which Nature has operated, so much system has she bestowed upon her works, you may follow for hundreds of miles the same manifestations, till from some favourable point of vantage you may discover unfolded before you the clue and the abiding principles of her extensive and majestic plan. What approach was better calculated to offer large views over Nature and to instruct us in her designs than one which scaled the walls of the girdle ranges where they tower highest above land and sea? From Batum it might be possible to penetrate the mountains of Ajara, and debouch upon some of the most elevated regions of the plateau from which the upper waters and earliest affluents of the Kur decline; but the lower reaches of the Chorokh and its alpine tributaries intersect a most intricate and savage country, where the process of elevation has resulted in dislocation of the range, and has produced convulsions which, while they afford a most interesting field to the geologist and to the student of mountain-structure, have placed obstacles in the way of human communications which the traveller is not required to overcome. By following the bend of the chain up the coast and along the Rion until it again assumes a normal course, he may avoid this knot of ridges and maze of valleys and at the same time obtain a clearer and more definite conception of the geography of these lands. We learnt that there was a road from the plain of the Rion up the side and to the summit of the range; we soon decided upon the superior attractions which it promised, and took our tickets for the capital of the country on the west of the Meschic barrier, the ancient city of Kutais.

August 22.—Rain was falling as we slowly steamed away from the station; it is almost always raining at Batum. The clouds cannot leap the gigantic bulwark of the mountains at this south-eastern angle of the sea; they cling to the fir-clad slopes or put out hands and scale the escarpments until they become exhausted and dissolve. The town was soon behind us as we wound along the foot of the range on the narrow respite of the shore—Batum, with her grim defiance of the written law of Europe, with her peaceful situation at the gate of the oil industry, of which she receives the products by the railway from the Caspian to distribute them over all the world; a creation of modern Russia on the familiar official pattern

of spreading boulevards with fine shops and large hotels. Here is the starting-point of the first train which skirts the coast of the Euxine—and even this remote example of the species turns aside from the mysterious seaboard to the cities of the interior after a brief space of some twenty miles. Yet within such limits we are carried through the wildest piece of country that may be found between the mouth of the river Rion and the entrance to the Black Sea, a district endowed with extraordinary fertility, which still remains unexploited and unreclaimed. It is inhabited here and there by a few straggling settlements, which contrast to the splendour of his natural surroundings the squalor of uncivilised man. We have outreached the furthest extension of the fringe of Greek elements; Georgian peoples live in the valleys of the interior and are thinly scattered upon the malarious coast; while further east, where the chain has left the sea and is aligned upon the plains, lowlands as well as mountains, the skirts of the range and its innermost recesses are the home of a population of Georgian race. Between Trebizond and the Russian fortress first the Lazis and then the Ajars may perhaps be regarded as transitional factors to the new order which commences after you have left Batum. I should not venture to pronounce upon the racial connections of the Lazis; they may represent the aboriginal occupants of their country, the wild tribes who harassed the army of Xenophon and were the settled plague of the Byzantine governors and of the emperors of the Comnenian line. The Ajars would appear to be of mixed parentage; like the Lazis they profess the Mohammedan faith. The Georgian districts which we are now entering still retain the names of the several independent principalities to which they formerly belonged, and except in the case of Abkhasia, up in the north at the foot of Caucasus, the Christian religion almost exclusively prevails. First comes Guria along the shore and the bend of the mountains; Imeritia extends on either bank of the Rion and as far as the pass of Suram; Mingrelia is the name of the country on the north of the Kolchian river, and it is bounded by Imeritia in the east.

For a distance of some fifteen miles the landscape was monotonous; on the one hand the almost vertical bulwark of the mountains, on the other the little grey waves breaking on the stony shore. But just before we arrived at the station of Kobulety the oppressive proximity of the range was relaxed, the country opened, and between low forest and maize-grown clearings

the soil-charged waters of a river wound their way down towards the sea. It was the commencement of the scenery which is characteristic of Guria, a tract of virgin woodland which clothes the spurs of the receding chain and the alluvial flats and marshes of the coast. Rolling hills take the place of the abrupt wall of rock; they are covered with a jungle of bush and little trees, which is broken here and there by irregular patches planted with Indian corn. Dark streams heavy with loam descend between high banks. Not a village could we see, nor any human habitation; distant prospects were obscured by a veil of mist. Yet the day was fairly fine, and, if the clouds were deeply banked on the horizon, the zenith often burst to pure blue. As we proceeded, the forest increased both in grandeur and in luxuriance; clusters of magnificent trees rose from the bush and above the brushwood, until the features of hill and spur became lost beneath the lofty overgrowth and transformed to masses or ledges of tall stems and spreading branches outlined against the sky. The withered forks of lifeless trunks stood out in grim relief from this ground of shadow, or were projected in weird tracery upon the field of light —an eloquent proof that no human hand had yet disturbed the natural order of these primeval woods. The sea was lost behind leafy brakes festooned with luscious creepers, which flourish with almost tropical development in this warm climate and upon this soaking soil. Not a single road did we see; the stations are mere stages, and the only sign of the presence of man was one of the long-legged dappled pigs so common in Imeritia, which was trespassing on the line.

Such are the characteristics which broadly prevail between Kobulety and Lanchkhuty, a space of some twenty-four miles. But we had not yet reached the latter station, which is situated due north of the capital of Guria, Ozurgeti, when new features were discovered in the scene. On the left hand the view opened across an even country where the sappy stems and reed-like forms and flowers of the maize-plants alternated with stretches of unreclaimed bush; and in the distance a bold hill, only partially wooded, projected into the plain from a long, vague line of mountains which closed the horizon on the north. We felt that these must surely be the spurs of Caucasus, and that the Phasis would shortly be disclosed.

You cross that fabled river—the modern Rion—by the commonplace method of a railway bridge; it flows between high

banks through the wide expanse of these surroundings on the southern margin of the plain. Some distance east of these lower reaches the impetuous current that has pierced the Caucasus, from which it issues at Kutais, has been deflected by the mountains of the southern border, which turn it towards the west. You do not follow its tortuous course, which skirts the outworks of these mountains as they stretch inwards from the coast; the ground is flat, the railroad points more directly for the capital at the foot of the great chain on the north.

Mile upon mile the plain of the Rion was unfolded about us, a fertile province which might be made the granary of Georgia, but which would now appear to produce little else but the lowest of the cereals, an endless succession of plantations of Indian corn. The land is ill-reclaimed; little labour has been expended, and the bush starts up among the canes. At the stations we remarked groups of women and young girls clad in loose cotton dresses with cotton kerchiefs on their heads. Geese strutted along the line or paddled in the shallow streams, and we became familiar with the strange appearance of the Imeritian pigs. But still no village! At rare intervals a wooden hut with a large verandah, and here and there among the maize one of the rude wooden stages erected to command a prospect over the fields.

As we advanced, the dim and misty boundary of the Caucasus took shape and colour about the lower slopes. The soft hues of vegetation, the brighter flashes of naked strata were distinguished from the uncertain background of rock and cloud; bold ridges with fantastic outlines stood up on the horizon; but here and there the white vapour was still clinging to their highest parapets and spreading fanwise to the brief circle of clear sky. Above them lay a world of half-lights and banked cloud-masses, the veiled presence of the main chain. Behind us rose the wooded ridges of the southern range, till they vanished in the folds of the murky canopy which they hold so firmly and love so well; but the marshes had disappeared and the lowest spurs which met the plain were almost devoid of trees. On our point of course the two great ranges appeared to mingle together and arrest our even progress towards the east.

For a second time we were overlooking the stream of the Rion to regain the left bank. It was flowing with a rapid current in a direct line from the Caucasus, channelling the beached-up shingle of an extensive bed. In places the waters spread in

shallow lakes and deposit a thick sediment of soil. This upper portion of the plain is barren and stony; it is partially covered with a low jungle of bush. It is confined on either side by the meeting flanks of the mountains; and as we made our way due north with the river serpenting beneath us, all prospect on our right hand was shut out by rising ground clothed with a forest of low oak trees.

On the opposite slopes, among the deepening tints of wood and clearing, beneath the growing distinction of light and shade, we could discern the white faces of a few scattered houses and then the gardens among which they stood. Two larger buildings were apparent, crowned with conical cupolas, of which the roofing was coloured a soft green. Such are the outskirts of Kutais; the town is hidden from the plain. Towering above the scene and almost infinitely high, we might feel vaguely but could scarcely see the gigantic framework of Caucasus, except where here and there a dazzling light among the clouds revealed the presence of a snowfield in the sky.

We were tempted to linger in the capital of Imeritia, and I can confidently recommend to the more leisurely traveller a protracted stay in this fascinating place. You will never tire of the beauty of site and grandeur of surroundings, while few street scenes are more picturesque than those which are disclosed during an afternoon ramble in the Jewish quarter of Kutais. It is a convenient centre for excursions into the recesses of Caucasus, and you have only to follow the windings of the valley of the Rion to be introduced to the inmost sanctuaries of the chain. In the ruins of the noble cathedral beyond the outskirts of the town, in the neighbouring and well-preserved monastery of Gelat, with its enchanting prospect from the slopes of Caucasus over the open landscape of the south, both the archæologist and the student of architecture will discover an abundant source of interest; while, if the study of Nature herself be among the objects of your journey, what richer field could be offered to the geologist or the naturalist than these mountains and untouched forests and flowery hills? But we ourselves were hurried away by the exigencies of travel after a short sojourn of two and a half days, and my present purpose must be confined to the elucidation of those natural features which accompanied the early stages of our ascent to Armenia, and which were unfolded to our view in an extensive panorama from the declivities about Kutais.

I shall therefore take my reader to some convenient standpoint in the environs, let us say to the cliffs on the right bank of the Rion and the hill upon which the massive ruins of the cathedral rise on the sky-line above the leafy brakes (Fig. 6, *a*). I can show you the position from the opposite bank of the river in a picture which was taken over a mile above the town from the road which ascends the valley and which we followed on our way to Gelat (Fig. 6). The Rion is flowing from you into the middle distance coming from the north; Kutais itself is hidden

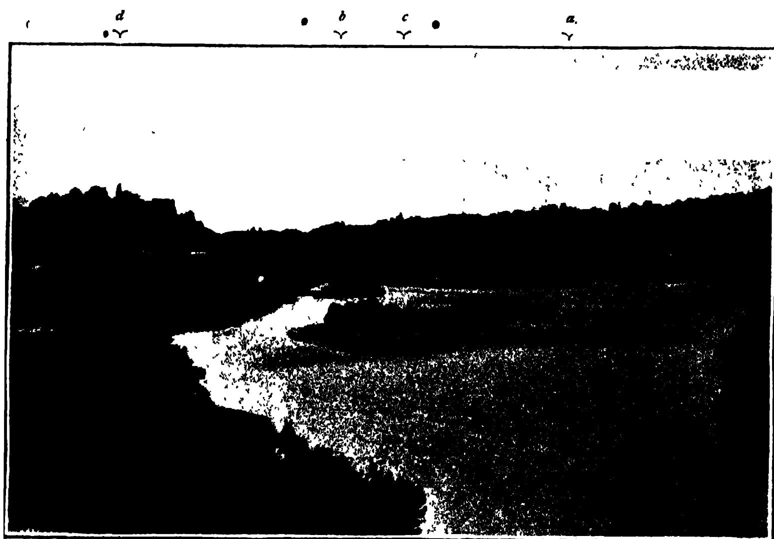


FIG. 6. BANKS OF THE RION ABOVE KUTAIS.

by a wooded promontory (Fig. 6, *d*); but you see the group of buildings which compose the Armenian and the Catholic churches, and which crown the extreme northerly projection of the site (Fig. 6, *b*). Three bridges span the Rion where it sweeps past the town confined between lofty banks, and lead from the busy streets to the peaceful heights which overlook them and command all the landscape of the plain. I cannot imagine a more charming walk than by the hill church of St. George (Fig. 6, *c*) to the pleasant eminence which I have already described.

We reach our point, and there before us expands the open landscape of which the second photograph embraces a considerable part (Fig. 7). We are standing on the southern slopes of Caucasus, with a wide belt of hill and ridge behind us, and, beyond



Fig. 7. Plain of the Rion from the Southern Slopes of Caucasus; Kutais in the Foreground.

and far above such familiar natural features, the white serrations and air-borne snowfields of the inmost chain. The atmosphere is fresh and crisp even at this season and with this temperature;[1] and banks of white cloud float in the sky. At our feet lies Kutais, with head upon the hillside and foot upon the margin of the plain; the eye follows the winding river which has just escaped from Caucasus and is flowing outwards towards the opposite range; the horizon is closed by that wall of mountain, emerging solid from a tender veil of mist. The plain itself is flat as water; it is coloured with the golden hues of the ripening maize-fields and featured by a labyrinth of vague detail. On the left hand, outside the photograph, a little north of east, you just discern high on the slopes beyond the left bank of the Rion the site of the monastery of Gelat; and the other day we thought we could descry from its lofty terrace, at the base of a distant promontory of Caucasus the shimmer of the sea in the west.

Let us realise for a moment the meaning of the landscape, and allow the mind to assist the eye. The opposite mountains belong to the girdle of ranges which buttress the Armenian tableland, the same which we have followed along the coast of the Black Sea, and which we left at our entrance upon the plain of the Rion stretching eastwards away from the shore. Here they constitute the barrier which separates the lowlands of Imeritia from the highlands about Akhaltsykh in the south; and, if you wish to examine the structure of this barrier more closely, you will find that the back or spine of the system consists of a ridge which extends in an easterly direction to about the longitude of Tiflis. The Caucasus, with an axis inclining south-eastwards, steps up to this latitudinal chain, and just east of Kutais the two systems join hands in the belt of picturesque hill scenery which divides the watershed of the Kur from that of the Rion, and which we already know under the name of the Meschic linking range. East of Tiflis the axis of the Armenian border ranges is turned towards south-east, and follows a direction parallel with that of Caucasus along the trough of the Kur towards the Caspian Sea. Like the Caucasus here in the north, its opposite neighbour, that southern bulwark extends from sea to sea; and some geographers have applied to it the name of Little Caucasus, a misleading and, if we attach importance to the *phenomena* of Nature, a most

[1] At 11.15 A.M. 83° F.

inappropriate name. For while the northern range may be described as an isolated and independent structure—independent in appearance at least—which rises on the one side from about the same levels as those to which on the other side it declines, that on the south is in reality nothing more than a succession of steps or buttresses which lead up to and flank the Armenian highlands. The first stages of our journey will conduct us up the slopes of those mountains, from a plain which does not much exceed the sea-level, across a ridge of which the pass has an altitude of about 7000 feet, to plains which range between a height of 7000 and not less than 3000 feet above the sea.

August 25.—From Kutais to where the southern range perceptibly commences to gather, about the village of Bagdad, is a direct distance of close on fifteen miles. So even is the plain that the road makes little deviation and covers the space in seventeen miles. At half-past eight on the morning of the 25th of August our victoria, drawn by four horses abreast, made its start from the little hotel in which we had lodged; it was followed by the cart which we had engaged for the luggage and to which was harnessed a similar team. We had hired both conveyances for the whole of the journey to Abastuman on the further slopes of the southern range; the regular avenue of communication with that summer watering-place is by the valley of the Kur and Borjom, and it is necessary to make your own arrangements if you desire to take the Imeritian road. We spent five hours upon the first stage of only seventeen miles; our coachman was obliged to harbour the strength of his horses for the long ascent to the summit of the chain, and we were always halting to take photographs and to realise the interest of the magnificent scenery which forms the distant setting of these lowlands. We were crossing the uppermost portion of the plain of the Rion, where it rises to the belt of hill and mountain which links the northern with the southern range; long stretches of woodland with an undergrowth of wild rhododendron had taken the place of the expanse of golden maize-fields, broken by little trees and intervals of bush. To emerge from the shady avenue upon a tract of open country was to feast our eyes upon a landscape of no ordinary character. On the one hand the airy pinnacles and gleaming snowfields of Caucasus, on the other the forest-clad walls of the Armenian border chain; in the west the varied detail that covers

the floor of the plain as with a carpet, and behind us the spurs meeting in the east.

We were impressed by the hush of life over the plain and in the woodlands, by the sparseness of human habitations, and by the absence of traffic along the road. Such are the certain signs in the East of economical stagnation, when man is idle and the earth sleeps. It was therefore with pleasure that about one o'clock we came upon a tiny village and lingered beneath a spreading tree. Not very far from this little settlement we crossed a stream at the base of the mountains, and at half-past one we came to a halt in the street of the village of Bagdad, after a short but perceptible rise. We noticed some vineyards during the course of our upward progress; the elevation of Bagdad, according to the single reading of my barometer, is 922 feet.[1]

It is at Bagdad that you begin the ascent of the mountains of the southern border. So broad is the range, the pass so lofty and the road so tortuous, that it would be no easy matter to cross them in a single day. The direct distance measured on a map from the village to the pass is no less than seventeen miles, and along the road you cover some thirty-one miles. There is a hut at about half-way which is a convenient night's quarter, and we resolved to make it the goal of our second stage.

We left Bagdad at three o'clock, with the valleys still open about us, with the wooded slopes rising on every side. After we had passed to the right branch of the stream which we had crossed below the village, the gradients commenced to make themselves felt, and here and there among the foliage the first fir trees started, the delicate blue firs. We followed the course of the running water up the spacious valley, through the forest which clothes the range from foot to summit and stands up along the ridges against the sky.

The saturated atmosphere and warm climate of the seaboard were still with us; the one feeds, the other stimulates this luxuriant growth. Even on this fine day the clouds still lingered in the uppermost hollows, and when at four o'clock we opened up a beautiful side valley, all the landscape of wooded fork and winding torrent reflected the silvery hues of a crown of captive vapour clinging to the recesses at the head of the glen.

Verst after verst we might count our progress on the white milestones, but we rarely observed a sign of the presence of man.

[1] Temperature 86° F.

A Georgian wayfarer, staff in hand, a peasant's cottage with its wide verandah, were the infrequent incidents in a scene which still belonged to Nature, and with which such figures and such objects harmonised. At last at the side of the road where the forest was thickest we came upon a solitary little cabin, a neat wooden structure, which we at once recognised as our shelter for the night. It was a quarter-past seven o'clock and we had reached an altitude of 1900 feet.[1] During the space of some fourteen miles from our mid-day station, the valley to which we had throughout been faithful had narrowed to a deep trough; and an hour before our arrival at the hut of Zikari the road was taken for a short space along the left bank of the stream, in order to avoid a projecting buttress of its eastern wall.

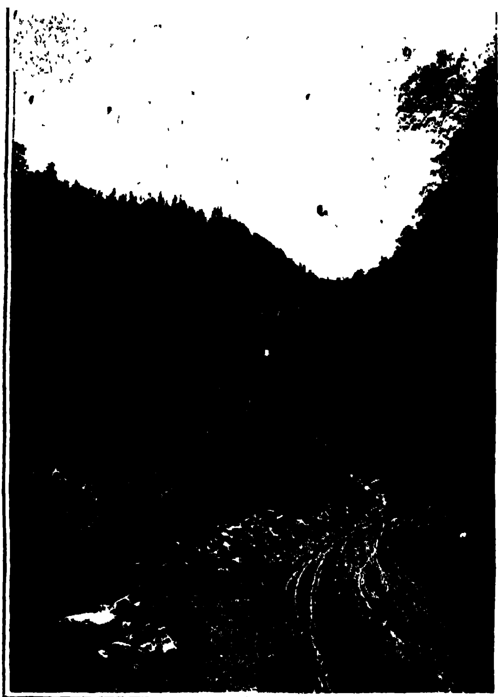


FIG. 8. ROAD IN THE FOREST.

August 26.—Some distance below the hut the stream which we had followed is joined by a tributary coming from the east; the two branches of the fork collect a number of smaller affluents which have their sources near the summit of the chain. In continuing our course next morning up the more westerly of these branches, we were rapidly transported to the more open landscapes of the higher slopes, and made our way almost in a direct line for the pass, circling the outworks of the principal ridge. Filmy white clouds were suspended from the pine woods above us, when at a quarter-past seven we again took to the road; but for five hours the forest trees remained with us and increased rather than

[1] Temperature at 10 P.M. 72° F.; 6.30 A.M. 66° F.

diminished in size. In one place it was a lime of unusual proportions rearing a maze of branches from a quadruple trunk; at another we stood in wonder before a gigantic beech which measured 17 feet 6 inches round the base. The undergrowth was supplied by laurel and holly, and cascades leapt from the rocks. The reader may see our road as it wound through this sylvan scenery (Fig. 8), but he must allow his imagination to supply the inherent deficiencies of photographic methods. The rare inhabitants of these solitudes are of Georgian race and wear the dress of Georgia (Fig. 9), but their straggling tenements are few and far between.



FIG. 9.

Above the forest the groves of fir, higher still the grassy slopes and naked crags—such is the familiar order of mountain scenery as you slowly rise to the spine of a range. The two last features became apparent at the sixty-sixth verst-stone, or some twelve and a half miles from the hut. A profusion of wild raspberries were growing on the mossy banks and provided us with a delicious meal. We remarked the sharpness of the summits of the ridge above us and read the number of the seventy-second verst. The pass is just above this lofty standpoint, and we left the carriage to reach it by a short cut. We arrived there after a brief climb to find a fresh breeze blowing and all the wide belt of mountain at our feet.

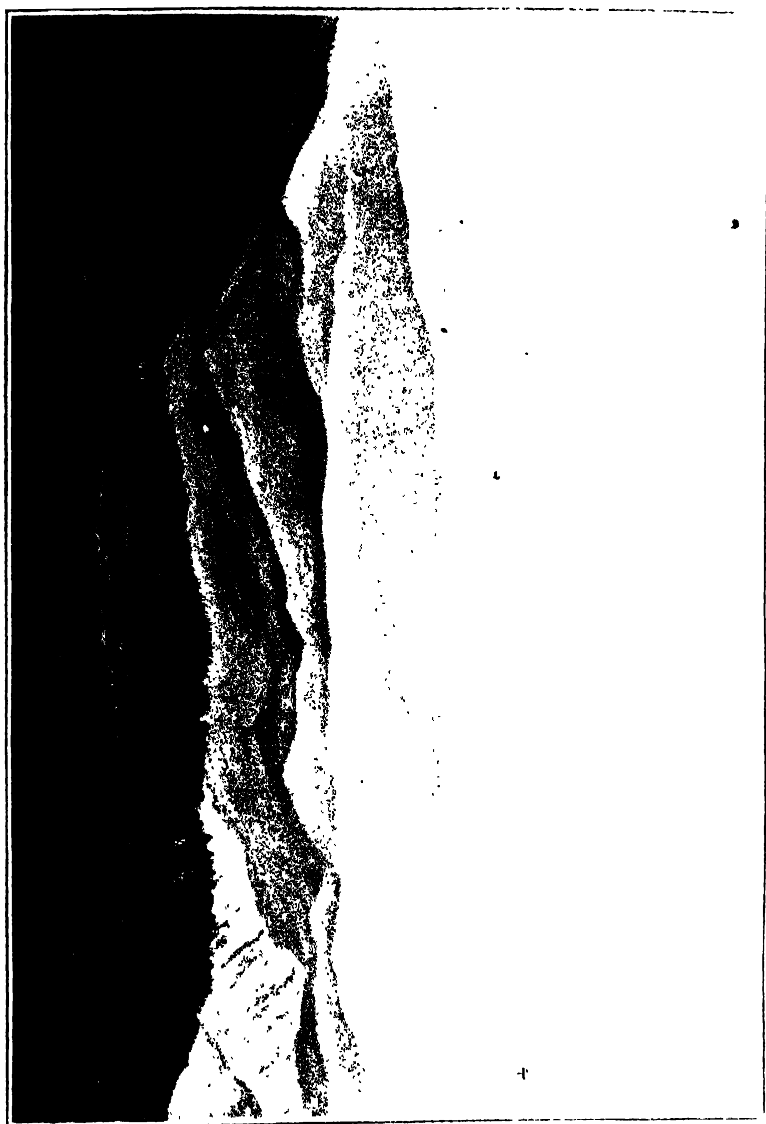
I doubt whether there exists in the nearer Asia a standpoint which commands a prospect at once so grand and so instructive as that which is unfolded from the summit of the Zikar Pass (Zikarski Perival; altitude by my Hicks mountain aneroid, 7164 feet;

Russian survey, 7104 feet). With its double front towards north and south and the contrasting features of the dual landscape, it may be said to overlook two worlds. On the north the view ranges across the broad belt of wooded mountains, which culminate in this ridge, to the gigantic barrier of the Caucasus of which the peaks are distant some ninety to a hundred miles (Fig. 10). Invisible in the hollow lies the plain of the Rion; the crests before you, boldly vaulted and clad with forest to the very summits, sweep away to a dim horizon of grey mist; above that uncertain background the snows and glaciers of Caucasus appear suspended in the air among the clouds. Dense vapour shrouds the scene, and above the flashes of the snow a long bank of white cloud spreads fanwise up the sky.

But turn to the south—the forms and texture of the earth's surface, the lights and shadows falling through a rarer atmosphere from lightly floating filaments of cloud, are those of a new world (Fig. 11). The pine wood still struggles down the hillside, and gathers from the blighted trunks around you to clothe the first valleys of the southern watershed. But the view will no longer close with successive walls of mountain; the road ceases winding up the slopes of successive outworks; every vertical line, each deep vaulting relaxes and disappears. The highest plains of the tableland attain about the same elevation as the pass upon which you stand; all the outlines in the distance are horizontal, all the shapes shallow-vaulted and convex. If you follow the long-drawn profiles of the loftier masses, it is the form of a cone that breaks the sky-line, and never that of a peak. The colours are lightly washed ochres and madders; the surface of the volcanic soil is bare of all vegetation; the shadows lie transparent and thin. Such was our first view of Armenia and such the impression which our later travel confirmed.



V Z PAS



CHAPTER III

TO AKHALTSYKH

WHERE else except in London will you see clever driving? Is not England the only country where you can trust your coachman to shave his corners and keep his team in hand? With four horses abreast the process is perhaps not easy, especially down a fairly steep incline. We were pursued by a landau which contained some Russian officers who had been spectators of our photographic and hypsometrical operations on the summit of the pass; our driver became inspired with the spirit of rivalry, and within a few minutes the trot had developed into a canter, the canter into a headlong career. On the left hand a deep abyss, on the right a mossy bank, and the post of danger occupied by our plump little dragoman who sat on the left-hand box seat! The carriage grazed the bank and, before we had time to pull the Armenian to us, struck and overturned. No damage to the horses or to the rest of the company, but the unfortunate dragoman, moaning and sobbing on the road! Happily his contusions were not serious, and a draught of brandy almost restored him to the possession of himself. Assisted by our kind acquaintances, who were the unwitting cause of the disaster and who had hurried to the scene, we conveyed him down the slope to where a gay picnic party were regaling themselves with cakes and tea and a variety of strong liqueurs. At once the ladies busied themselves with the bruised and dust-covered youth, whose numbed senses quickly revived under their care. But the incident delayed us, and it was night before we arrived at the outskirts of Abastuman, situated in the pine woods some ten miles south of the pass, at an elevation of 4278 feet. We were tempted to pitch our tents above the village, on the banks of a pleasant stream; but the darkness as

well as the lateness of the hour decided us to have recourse to a crowded hotel.

We were again in the midst of wealth and luxury—an oasis strangely incongruous with the solemn character with which these vast and lonely landscapes are impressed. The strains of music floated on the air; a dance was proceeding, to which after a hurried meal my cousin and myself repaired. All that was most brilliant in the official world of the Caucasus was gathered in the bright ball-room; and as we made our way there through the garden we met a group of returning guests gathered about a slender and youthful figure, to whom all appeared to defer. It was the Grand Duke George of Russia, since Tsarevich, who was residing in this lofty station alike in winter as in summer for the benefit of his health. In the afternoon of the following day, which was devoted to work and to preparations, came a message from His Imperial Highness inviting us to mid-day dinner; so we deferred our start from early morning to a later hour. His villa was situated just above the street of pleasure-houses among the fir trees which clothe the valley from trough to ridge; and on the opposite side of the road the slope had been converted into a park, which contained living specimens of the big game of the Caucasian wilds. The dinner was *al fresco* in the garden of the villa; the Grand Duke welcomed us in perfect English and placed my cousin on his right and myself on his left hand. Opposite me and on my cousin's right sat the Duke of Oldenburg, a practised sportsman and a charming personality, whose lively humour made the talk flow. On my left I had a graver but extremely well-informed gentleman whose conversation impressed me, but whose name I forgot to record. M. Asbeleff of the suite of His Highness was also of the party, and most kindly provided us with introductions which were of great service to us at a later stage of our journey. Quite a respectable number of guests were gathered round the circular table, the majority clad in the white cotton tunics which are the summer uniform of the official class.

A *purée* or thick soup was served, which I thought delicious, but which brought a twinkle from the playful eye of the Duke. As each successive dish of this dinner *à la Russe* made its appearance a smile came from across the table, or "Isn't it nasty?" or some even less mildly deprecating words. I ventured to demur to his good-humoured criticism and to submit that, if

the French alone possessed the art of cooking, the Russians succeeded, where the English failed signally, in making things taste nice. The champagne came in for a particular share of attention, having been produced by the Duke from his vineyards at Kutais. My cousin let out the secret that we had already made its acquaintance: that we had visited his cellars and had been greatly interested in his enterprise, especially on the evening at the hut of Zikari, when we had regaled ourselves with a bottle of his sparkling wine. He now insisted on our taking a little case with us, and promised it should be dry to suit what he said he knew to be our taste. My companion on the left discussed the objects of our journey, and was of opinion that we might succeed in reaching the slopes of Ararat before the first snows commenced. I told him that we were also anxious to study the condition of the country, and the conversation turned upon the limitations which he said were imposed in India upon foreigners travelling with similar aims. Can there be anything more fatuous than such restrictions? We both agreed that it was perfectly possible to guard against political intriguers and at the same time to leave *bona-fide* travellers free. The Grand Duke spoke English like an Englishman, and you could not have a more amiable host. We remarked that his features resembled those of his cousin, the Duke of York, of whom a portrait was placed on his writing-table together with the photographs of other members of our Royal House.

Two four-horsed posting carriages had been prepared for the drive to Akhaltsykh, distant 16½ miles. By four o'clock we had rejoined the rest of our party and were leaving behind us the pleasant station of Abastuman. We followed the tripping stream down the narrow valley, the rocky and beetling sides studded with firs from foot to summit; and from among them a ruined castle, ascribed as usual to Queen Thamar, frowned out upon the passage which it controls. But we had not gone far before a complete change came over the landscape; the valley opened, distant prospects were disclosed. Before us lay the scenery which is typical of Armenia and upon which our eyes had rested from the summit of the Zikar Pass. Nature is seldom abrupt in her processes; a transitional character invests the first slopes of the southern watershed; the narrow belt of pine-clad ridges interrupts the contrast between the luscious forests which cover the range on the side of the Black Sea littoral and the barren

highlands through which the upper waters of the Kur descend. We had issued from those recesses, and around us in a wide circle were unfolded the Armenian plains. The view ranged over an open country, for the most part bare of vegetation, and featured by a succession of convexities in the friable surface, from the foreground of hummock and hill to the sweeping outlines of the higher masses, changing colour and complexion with every change in the sky.

The ground was crumbling with excessive dryness; the soil is rich, and would no doubt yield crops of great value were it cultivated on a liberal scale. Yet all the cultivation we could see was of the nature of little patches of yellow stubble or lightly ploughed land. It was evident that the primitive methods of the East had not been superseded, and that agriculture still partook of the precarious character which is the outcome of centuries of political disturbance—the peasant uncertain of reaping what he has sown. Stony tracts interrupted these plots of reclamation, but in general the surface was apt for the plough. The springs of life had been exhausted by the drought of an Eastern summer; the fertile earth was bare as water, and transparent tints of pink and ochre invested the landscape far and wide. A spirit of vastness and loneliness breathed over the scene; the air was clear and crisp and recalled the bracing climate of the Persian tablelands.

Such characteristics were strange to some among our party, for only my cousin and myself knew the interior of Asia and recognised in the note which was now for the first time sounded the commencement of a familiar theme. We pursued our way in silence, each absorbed by his own reflections and all responsive to the same spell. Through the bleak landscape wound the little river and stretched the white line of the road. Here and there on the margin of the water or beyond the irregular border of the pebble-strewn bed a little orchard or a patch of garden planted with potatoes, formed a spot of verdure contrasting with the hues around.[1]

Where were the villages? For it seemed that there must be inhabitants who had gathered this scanty harvest and ploughed the surface of the darker soil. They select the slope of a hill or

[1] Radde (*Reisen in Hoch Armenien*, *Petermann's Mitth.*, Gotha, 1875, p. 59) says: "It appears that at least in this district potato culture is making considerable progress in recent times among the Armenians." He attributes this to the example of the Molokans and Dukhobortsy.

the rise of an undulation; the door and front of their dwellings are alone visible, the back is caverned into the shelving ground; you must pass close to such a settlement and by daylight to notice the incidence of a human element in the scene. We came upon four villages of this pattern before the mid-way station was reached. They were peopled by Tartars, who were occupied in threshing and winnowing the season's corn. The husks were flying in the air and the bright cottons of men and women fluttered in the breeze.

Benara, the posting-house which supplied us with fresh horses, is situated close to the bank of the stream, at no great distance above the point where it joins the Koblian Chai, a river which collects the drainage of the extreme north-western angle of the tableland. A little below this junction the united waters receive a further affluent, known as the Poskhov Chai, which gathers the streams from south-west and south-east. Even at this season the three combined form a river of fair size, flowing through the plain on an easterly course in a bed of many channels, and joining the Kur after passing through the town of Akhaltsykh. This river is usually called the Akhaltsykh Chai.

Our road followed its course, taking an abrupt bend eastwards and still faithful to the left bank. Some hillocks closed the view on the north for a short space; then they flattened, and in that direction the great plain rolled around us, bounded in the distance by hummock hills. At intervals we caught a glimpse of the pine-clad ridges of the border range, standing up on the horizon in the east. Behind us the long-drawn outlines and bare slopes of the mountains of the tableland, and towards the south the ground rising from the right bank of the river to the summit-line of a mountain mass of this character which has the hummock formation throughout.

Massed battalions of Russian soldiers, it seemed a whole army corps, were drawn up on the plain. We were passing a permanent camp with pavilions and stationary cannon, and for some distance the ground was dotted with white tents. A review was proceeding, and the dark uniforms of the troops gave their columns the appearance of a series of black blocks. A hymn was being sung; the stately music swelled over the hushed scene.

What a contrast between the landscape and such accidental incidents, the Russian road, the Russian camp! On the road little piles of stones heaped at regular intervals; but the country

without a fence, without boundaries or divisions, a mere expanse of rolling soil.

The first town or larger village that we saw was Suflis, rising among orchards from the right bank. It is backed by the bleak mountain mass which the river skirts; the flat roofs, ranged in tiers, were scarcely distinguishable from the shelving ground, but the vertical lines of several minarets were seen from afar. Could you be shown a more typical example of a tumble-down Eastern township? Yet you are on the threshold of an important fortress and provincial centre where modern appliances are in vogue. . . . Suflis passed, we approached more closely to the river; the mass on our right broke off in cliffs to the margin of the water, while on our left hand a low ridge, which had the appearance of an outcrop of volcanic rock, stepped up to the border of the stream. The road followed down the defile, skirting huge boulders and overtowered by bold crags; until the heights on our left were crowned with masonry, partly ruinous; and before us, across the river, where the gorge opened, the cherry-coloured roofing of the modern town of Akhaltsykh was outspread among gardens on the level ground. A little further down we crossed a substantial bridge, and, without entering the town, pitched our tents on the sand of the river-bed. It was nearly seven o'clock, and night had fallen before our camping operations were complete.

From the Olympian eminence of the Grand Duke's circle at Abastuman and from the steps of the Imperial throne, we came near to being hurled forth at Akhaltsykh into the abyss of a Russian prison. The gods must surely weep at the sorry manner in which their human ministers interpret their laws. Day broke without any shadow of presentiment—a fresh and breezy morning, the river rippling before us, and on the opposite bank the ancient fortress edging the steep crags and outlined on the luminous sky. The delicious sleep beneath a tent was followed by an early bathe; the town was silent, but, as we made our way up the margin of the current, a little village was discovered, of which the feminine occupants were already descending the slope with their many-shaped water-jars and divesting themselves of their loose cottons to splash on the brink of the stream. A little later we passed their hovels and recognised them as Armenians, and admired the beauty of one among them, now busy with the routine of her household, who with her arched eyebrows, aquiline nose, massive forehead, and coal-black tresses reminded us of Biblical heroines.

The fascination of travel consists in its many-coloured contrasts; nothing ruffled the composure of our mood of detachment as we left this peaceful scene to explore a fresh hive of human beings with the easy confidence of men to whom the land belongs. Our first visit was as usual to the civil governor; he was to conduct us to the hive, remark upon the peculiar qualities of the honey, and deferentially withdraw while we pursued our own investigations into the mysteries of insect life. If our attitude could be convicted of any element of such fatuous vanity, the illusion was quickly and rudely dispelled. We were taken to a mean structure on the southern outskirts of the town, which resembled wooden boxes placed one above another, with broad wooden verandahs running round. These balconies were indeed the distinguishing feature; and, when we observed the groups of ill-mienced loafers who loitered within them, it was hard to believe that we were anywhere else but in Turkey visiting a pasha at the *Serai*. After some palaver with the menials, who were not disposed to excessive courtesy, it transpired that the governor had left that very morning on a visit to Abastuman. We asked to see his deputy, and were ushered into the presence of a broad-shouldered official whose little eyes and cast of face were essentially Russian, and who did not receive us with any excessive show of warmth. Such is the manner of deputies all the world over—but our disappointment turned to surprise when who should enter the apartment but Wesson, closely escorted by a formidable individual whom we at once recognised as a commissary of police!



FIG. 12. PORTRAIT OF IVAN.

May I introduce the reader to Ivan Kuyumjibashoff, a personality no less alarming than his name (Fig. 12), and may I take this early opportunity to place him on his guard against

the fallacy that the Armenians are not a martial race? For this man was a pure Armenian, in spite of the Russian termination of *-off* instead of *-ean*. Erzerum was his native city; his family had emigrated to Russia, and during the last war against the Turks Ivan had gained the cross of honour for personal bravery in the field. At his side hung a sword of which the scabbard and hilt were adorned with chased silver; the blade was his special pride, being of ancient Khorasan workmanship, a trophy from the Kurds. His features inspired fear; his skin of leather was the result of exposure; but we had not yet learnt that, like all true warriors who are not barbarians, the lion's fierceness was tempered by the meekness of the lamb. A cloud settled over the face of the deputy as the massive fist turned the handle of the door and the heavy tread fell on the bare boards. Arrived at his side, Ivan whispered something in his ear, and I ventured to ask what might be the business of this man. The official replied that he was the emissary of Captain Taranoffsky, the chief of the so-called *gendarmerie*, and that he had been sent to conduct us to the presence of his superior, who would personally explain the purport of his summons. I enquired whether Colonel Alander was not the governor of Akhaltsykh, and his office the seat of supreme power; I was answered that there was another and separate jurisdiction which the governor did not control. The deputy added with an agreeable humour that, should we be thrown into prison, he would be powerless to take us out. Nothing therefore to be done but to follow Ivan; and would that his master had been as capable as himself!

In these Armenian provinces of Russia the machinery of administration is conducted by a handful of Russian officials through Armenians, who are employed even in the higher grades. The Armenian is a man of ancient culture and high natural capacity; neither the instinct nor the quality would be claimed by his Russian superior, who is the instrument of a system of government rather than a born ruler, and who in general is lacking in those attributes of pliancy and individual initiative which it is the tendency of rigid bureaucracies to destroy. Moreover the Russian official gives the impression of being overwhelmed by his system, like a child to whom his lessons are new; and, when you see him at work among such a people as the Armenians, you ask yourself how it has happened that a race with all the aptitudes are governed by such wooden figures

as these. There are of course notable exceptions to this general statement, which resumes one's experience of the subordinate officers rather than of those who are highest placed. Taranoffsky was about as bad a specimen of his class as it has been my misfortune to meet. A short man of portly figure, fat red face, and little eyes, he had all the self-assertion which so often accompanies small stature, all the unfriendliness which seems the almost necessary outcome of a lack of physical grace. I at once perceived all the elements of an unpleasant situation; nor were my apprehensions disproved by the result. We were taken to a hotel, deprived of our papers and letters, and placed under close police surveillance pending a decision as to our future fate. The warmest pass of arms was that which took place over our photographic negatives, which our persecutor peremptorily required. I represented that many of the films were as yet undeveloped, and was absolute in my refusal to give them up. On the other hand I expressed myself anxious that he should see them developed in his presence, for which purpose I begged him to prepare a dark room. I forget whether he accepted this tempting proposal; tde negatives remained intact. Permission was given us to drive under escort to the monastery of Safar, and the arrival that night or the following morning of Colonel Alander appeared to alleviate the disfavour with which we were viewed. Not that these two *imperia* work harmoniously together! How can it be expected that they should? The political police are particularly active in fortress towns such as Kars or Akhaltsykh; but I understood from Ivan that they are pretty widely distributed over the country, and that their functions extend to tracking down Socialists and Nihilists, and in general to the diffusion of alarm and annoyance far and wide. "How ugly is man!" has exclaimed a French novelist; indeed how ugly at such moments he appears.

If the morning was consumed by these unforeseen complications, the afternoon held in store for the harried travellers a further contrast and a rich reward. The monastery of Safar is situated a few miles[1] south-east of Akhaltsykh on the lofty slopes of a volcanic ridge; the drive thither displays the landscape of the town and surrounding country, and the goal is a group of buildings, of which the principal church is a gem of architecture,

[1] By the road the distance, according to our coachman, would be 15 versts or 10 miles; by the track which we followed 10 versts or 6⅔ miles.

instinct with the graces that adorn and elevate life. For awhile we followed down the right bank of the river along the road toward Akhalkalaki and the east; then, almost reversing direction, turned up a side track on the right hand, which conducted us, always rising, across the bleak undulations at the back of the modern town. Here and there the soil had been sown and was yellow with stubble, or lay exposed in patches of plough; but cultivation was only partial, and for many a mile not a village could be discerned. Far and near, the surface of the earth was of a hummocky nature, like sands modelled by children's spades.

After jolting along this track for some distance, we again struck a metalled road. It winds along the side of the ridge upon which Safar is situated, and overlooks a deep ravine. The slope of the ridge is clothed in places by a scanty growth of bush and dotted by low trees; but the ravine and opposite hillside are bare and stony, and the landscape is bleak and wild in the extreme. The only signs of life and movement proceeded from a village of which the tenements were built into that opposite slope. The peasants in their gay cottons were threshing the season's harvest, and, as we returned, we saw them transporting it in little carts, drawn by eight oxen apiece, from the fields, where it had been left since the end of June in convenient places, up to the village threshing-floors. We were surprised at the evident prosperity of the occupants of this Georgian settlement; what could be more quaint than women with white gloves and parasols who dwelt in such hovels as those? We met several such groups on the road and about the monastery, which was the goal of their afternoon's walk; several families also, who had come from afar, were encamped at Safar, at once a pilgrimage and a pleasant residence during the summer months.

A similar practice no doubt prevailed with the powerful governors of Upper Georgia, of that remote and extensive province of Semo-Karthli which comprised the uppermost valleys of the Kur and Chorokh and the mountains of Ajara to the Kolchian coast. Known under the title of atabegs, they flourished in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, became independent of the kings of Georgia, and were only suppressed at a late date by the Ottoman Turks.[1] Here was their seat of predilection during the heats of summer, and, except for the arid soil and crops of stones that cover the valleys, one cannot but approve

[1] Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage autour du Caucase*, Paris 1839-43, vol. ii.

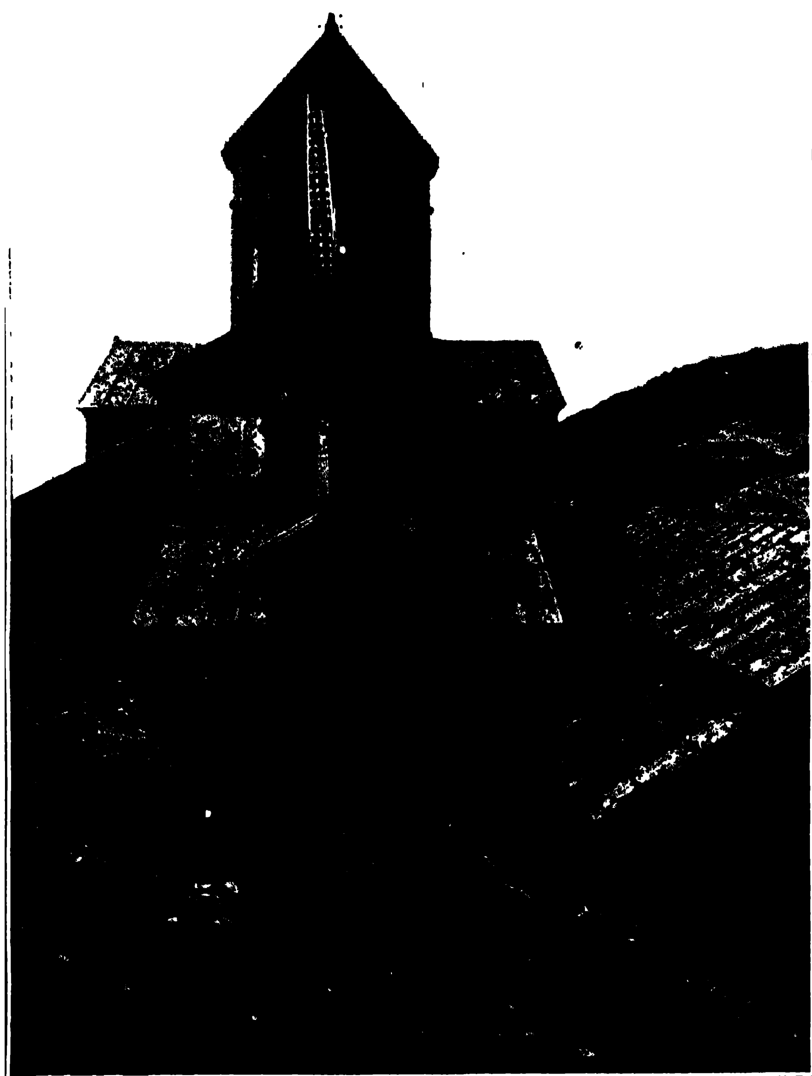


FIG 13. SAFAR: ST SABA FROM THE WEST.



Fig. 14. Safar: Porch of St. Saba

their choice. You are at a height of some 1900 feet above the town of Akhaltsykh; deep below you flows the Kur, the river of Ardahan as they call it, on its way to pierce the barrier of the border ranges by the passage of Borjom. On the side of the ridge a narrow site, whence the ground declines abruptly to the abyss below, is filled by a cluster of little chapels, backed, at the extreme end, by an imposing church. I wish I could offer my reader an ampler description; but just at this point I am trusting entirely to my memory and bewailing the loss of a portion of the day's notes. Counting the chapels, they would tell you that the monastery contained twelve churches, while according to our notions it possesses only one. That one is St. Saba, of which I offer two illustrations, one to present the *ensemble* of the building with the adjacent belfry (Fig. 13), the other to exhibit the charming detail of the porch on the west (Fig. 14).

In a treeless country, devoid of the rich bewilderment of a luxuriant Nature, and moulded on a scale which would mock the more ambitious creations of human effort and is everywhere present to the eye, such a jewel in stone as St. Saba and many another Armenian temple are seen at an advantage which they would scarcely possess in Western landscapes. Planted on the rough hillsides, overlooking vast expanses of plain and mountain, winding river and lonely lake, they offer at once a contrast to the bleakness of Nature and a quiet epitome of her startling forms. Take this church as an example of the most finished workmanship; what a pleasure to turn from the endless crop of chaotic boulders to the even surface of these walls of faced masonry which the dry climate preserves ever fresh, to the sharply chiselled stonework of the elaborate mouldings and bands of arabesques! Or, if you extend the vision to comprise the distant scene about you, it will often happen that the mountain masses tower one above another like the roofs and gables by your side, and culminate in the shape of a dome with a conical summit which repeats these outlines, like a reflection, against the sky.

St. Saba, although created through the munificence of a Georgian atabeg, is probably the work of an Armenian architect, and may certainly be counted as an example of the Armenian style. If we may trust a mutilated inscription in the interior, which has been in part deciphered by Brosset, the present church was built by the Atabeg Sargis, the son of Beka, who flourished between 1306 and 1334; and, if we could only be certain of the

signification of the four numeral letters which are plainly seen on the face of the wall at one side of the window of the western porch, we should perhaps be able to fix the exact date. Dubois, indeed, supposes that it was constructed by Manuchar, brother of the last of the atabegs, Kuarkuarch, who fought with such valour against the Turks. But Dubois is relying upon what he terms "constant tradition," and Brosset cautions us against accepting anything that he has written about Safar. One would certainly not have thought that such a well-instructed traveller, as was Dubois, could have mistaken a monument of the fourteenth century for a production of the later years of the sixteenth; and personally I should be inclined to attribute the edifice to a period at least as early as the fourteenth century.[1]

August 30.—The Tartar who had accompanied us on the excursion to Safar had fired my cousin with an account of some stag and big game shooting which was to be found some four hours' journey from the town. According to arrangement he made his appearance in the early morning, and found my cousin already prepared. I had resolved to devote the day to the town and outskirts, should our persecutors leave me free. But I had no sooner reached the bridge from our encampment on the bed of the river, in order to see my cousin on his way, than the plans of both of us were arrested by the advent of Ivan the Terrible, who rose from the cushions of a landau and summoned us to be seated at his side. I need not devote space to a repetition of fresh annoyances, since they had already almost reached their term. Was the departure of Colonel Alander connected with our arrival, and had he gone to satisfy himself about us at Abastuman? When at length we were able to see him he greeted us kindly, and furnished me with all the information of which I was in want. Let me therefore at once introduce the reader to the town of Akhaltsykh and to the people who dwell therein.

The view of the place which I offer (Fig. 15) was taken on the road to Akhalkalaki from the right bank of the river, some distance below the bridge. Within the precincts of the town the camera was strictly interdicted, although, since our tents were pitched just opposite the fortress, we might well have sketched that old-fashioned stronghold from memory when the canvas was

[1] Brosset, *Voyage archéologique en Transcaucasie*, St. Petersburg, 1840, 1re livraison, 2me rapport, pp. 119 *seq.*, and atlas, plates v. and vi.; Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 292 *seq.*

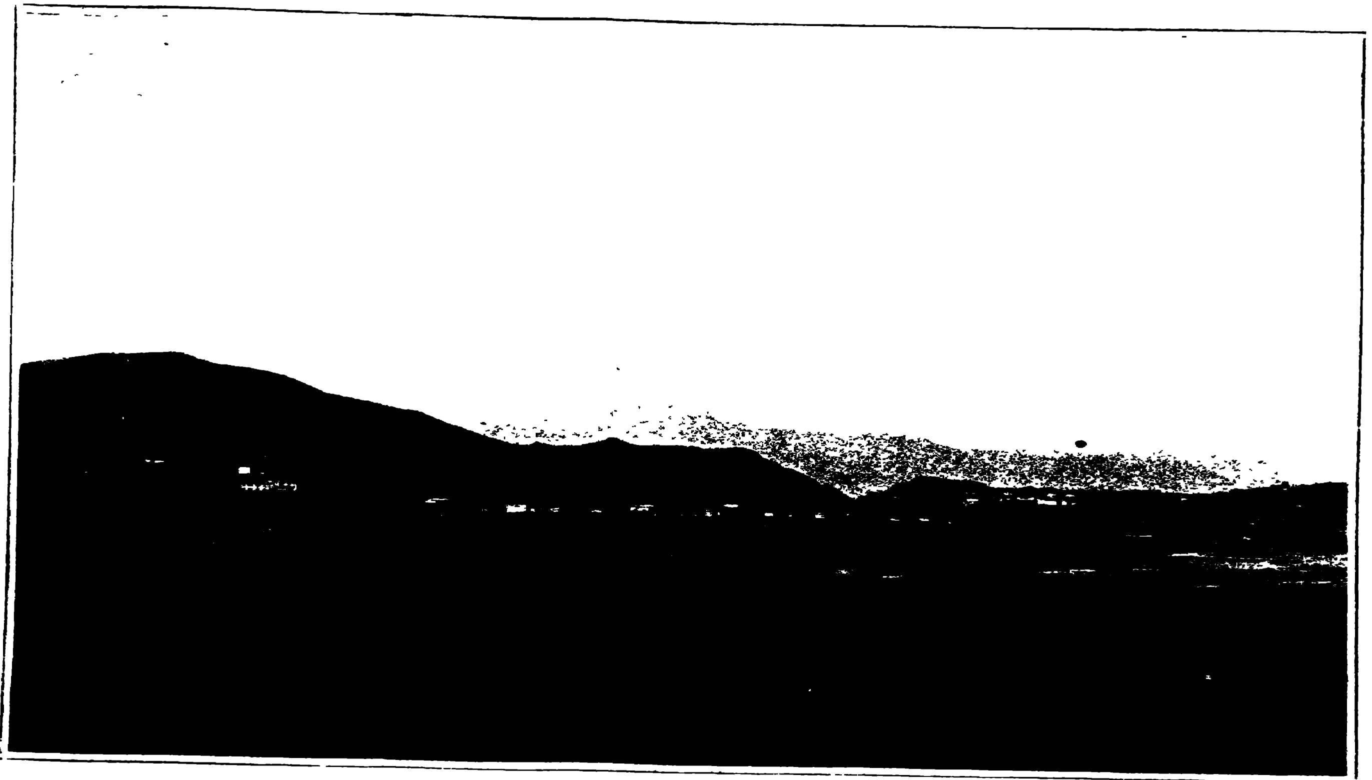


FIG AK ROAD T ALAK

closed for the night. The river is flowing towards you through grassy meadows, which are verdant even at this season, and which are being browsed by flocks of sheep and goats. On the right bank, on the left of the picture, and stretching across the middle distance to a promontory which is washed by the stream, lies the modern town with its gardens and substantial houses (Fig, 15, *a*); on the opposite shore, following the cliff from the extreme right of the illustration, you have first the old town (*b*), then the fortress (*c*), and last the gorge (*d*).

The inhabitants of Akhaltsykh are censused at 15,000—at the time of our visit the registered figure was 15,120, although the latest tabulated statistics which Colonel Alander was able to show me gave a total of 15,914 for 1891. This total was divided in the following manner, according to religion and race: Gregorian Armenians, 9620; Catholic Armenians, 2875; Georgians and Russians, excluding the garrison, 782; Roman Catholics, 97; and 2540 Jews. I cannot help thinking that the proportion of Armenians is excessive, and that the governor has included among those of the Catholic persuasion a considerable number of Armenian Catholics who are of Georgian race. At Kutais I had been informed by a Roman Catholic priest that I should find among the communion of the Armenian Catholics at Akhaltsykh many Georgians whose ancestors had been devout Catholics and had become united to the Armenian Catholics, as the nearest Catholic Church, when the Georgian Church followed the Greek in cutting off relations with Rome. The Georgian kings forbade them to hold their services in Georgian, which had been their practice previously. These men were no doubt the converts of the old Roman Catholic missions; it is known that at the commencement of the thirteenth century the kings of Georgia were in correspondence with the popes, and that these communications and the despatch of missionaries to Georgia were continued in the following century.[1] The published statistics of 1886 give the number of Georgians as 2730 souls, and evidently include the large majority of them among the *Roman* Catholics. It is therefore probable that both lists fall into error, and that of the two the published table is the more reliable in all that concerns distinction of race. I append it in a footnote,[2] and have only to

[1] Brosset, *op. cit.* p. 143.
[2] Population of Akhaltsykh:—
(1) According to nationality: Armenians, 10,417; Georgians, 2730; Jews,

add in this connection that in both lists the number of males exceeds that of females, and that for this reason the totals are in general too small. In Colonel Alander's list the male population amounts to 8335, in the published list to 8480 souls. The women must be at least as numerous as the men, although, owing to Eastern prejudices, they are much more difficult to count.

In several senses the town of Akhaltsykh has undergone a revolution during the course of the present century. At the commencement of this period we are introduced to a flourishing city of the Ottoman Empire, the capital of a pashalik, which was composed of six *sanjaks* or administrative divisions,[1] in close communication with the neighbouring cities of Kars and Erzerum and the emporium of an extensive traffic in Georgian slaves.[2] At this time it is said to have contained some 40,000 inhabitants, of whom the greater portion were Mussulmans.[3] The site of the city was the same as that of the old town of the present day, but the houses extended to the immediate confines of the citadel. The whole was defended by moats and a double row of walls with battlements and flanking towers. The right bank of the river was embellished by numerous gardens, but there does not appear to have been anything like a town upon this side. The citadel was remarkable for its beautiful mosque, with an imposing minaret more than 130 feet high. This minaret, like the mosque, was built of blocks of hewn stone; and, so solid was its structure, that it suffered little damage during the Russian bombardment, although hit by no less than seven cannon balls. Such was Akhaltsykh prior to its conquest by the Russians under Paskevich in 1828.[4] The conquerors introduced far-reaching changes, of

2545; others (including 145 Russians and 110 Poles), 424. Total, 16,116.

(2) According to religion: Gregorian Armenians, 9678; Catholic Armenians, 730; Roman Catholics, 2311; Jews, 2545; others (including 777 Russians Orthodox, 9 Lutherans, and 57 Sunni Mohammedans), 843. (Statistics concerning the populations of Transcaucasia derived from the family lists of 1886. Published by Government, Tiflis, 1893.)

[1] They were: Akhaltsykh, Atzkur, Aspinja, Khertvis, Akhalkalaki, Ardahan (Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 284-85).

[2] The slave trade was carried on through Circassians, who kidnapped the inhabitants of Georgia proper and fled with them across the Turkish border to Akhaltsykh (Dubois, (*op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 261-62; Haxthausen, *Transcaucasia*, London, 1854, p. 100).

[3] Adrien Dupré in Gamba, *Voyage dans la Russie méridionale*, Paris, 1826, vol. i. p. 403.

[4] For the interesting siege and capture of Akhaltsykh by Paskevich I may refer the reader to Monteith, *Kars and Erzerum*, London, 1856, ch. vi. pp. 182 *seq.*; Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 258 *seq.*, and a note to Haxthausen, *op. cit.* p. 100. Eli Smith, who travelled in the country in 1830-31, informs us that the siege of Akhaltsykh

which the evidence remains to the present time. They razed a portion of the town in the vicinity of the fortress, which had furnished cover to the Turks in the desperate attempt which they subsequently made to recapture their old stronghold. The outer walls of the city were either demolished or fell into ruin and disappeared. The mosque of the citadel was converted into a Russian church and shorn of its minaret.[1] A new town was founded on the right bank of the river and assigned to Armenian colonists. The Mussulman population emigrated into Turkey; and Akhaltsykh, which received a large body of Armenian immigrants from Kars and Erzerum, became practically a Christian town. The native inhabitants who were Christians erected belfries near their churches and heard with joy the sound of Christian bells. But it would seem that no great measure of prosperity attended this new birth. The immigrants were bent on doing business and opening shops; only those among them who were agriculturists did well. Commerce declined owing to the inclusion of the town within the frontier line of the Russian customs and the consequent interruption of relations with the neighbouring cities in the south. The traffic in slaves was, of course, abolished, and no considerable industry took its place. Akhaltsykh was shut up in her corner of Asia; for the impracticable barrier of the border ranges walls her off from the sea. Still the fact that the place was a frontier fortress of the Russian Empire must have been productive of at least a local trade. In 1833 the population appears to have numbered only 11,000 souls;[2] but it probably increased from that date, year by year. When Kars came into the permanent possession of the Russians, the newly-acquired fortress in part supplanted Akhaltsykh; and the progressive decline of the Turkish Empire has further contributed to relieve the Government of the necessity of providing the last-named stronghold with modern fortifications. At the time of my visit it was evident that the town was declining and losing importance year by year. I questioned several of the better-informed among the inhabitants as to the cause of this unhappy state of things. "You have long enjoyed the blessings of security," I observed, "both

was one of the two occasions upon which the Turks gave the Russians a fair trial of their bravery. The other was at Baiburt (*Missionary Researches in Armenia*, London, 1834, p. 82).

[1] Dubois saw it still standing in 1833. I cannot find when it was cut down. Brosset (*op. cit.* p. 149) mentions the conversion of the mosque.

[2] Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 263.

for property and life; yet in place of a steadily increasing prosperity I see nothing but signs of impoverishment and falling-off." As usual in the East, I received several answers; but all were unanimous in declaring that the principal reason was the depopulation of the surrounding country, owing to the persistent emigration of the Mussulmans and the want of colonists to take their place. Another cause, they said, was the decline in military importance to which I have already referred.

The modern town on the right bank was nearest to our encampment; may I therefore commence the account of what we saw at Akhaltsykh with a stroll through its garden-lined streets? The houses are nice little one-storeyed dwellings, some built of brick, others of stone. A feature were the quaint little spouts to carry off the rain-water, shaped at the ends to resemble dragons' heads. I have already spoken of the "cherry-coloured roofing"—an effect which we discovered was due to no more interesting process than a coat of paint applied to corrugated iron. In a similar manner the roof of a church would be tinted a cool green, and the combination of these hues with the rich foliage was extremely pleasing to the eye. Where the scattered tenements collect together and you reach the business quarter, here and there a modern shop may be seen; but the handicrafts for which Akhaltsykh is in some degree famous are still carried on in those brick-built booths with their shadowed recesses which constitute the little world of the Eastern artificer, at once his workshop and the mart for his wares. We examined some of the productions of the workers in silver without being tempted to buy. We were made aware of the existence of a silk industry for which the raw material is brought from Georgia. We visited the schools and conversed with the masters; but the scholars were making holiday. Akhaltsykh possesses two important schools, the one belonging to the Armenian community, the other a Russian State school. That of the Armenians provides education to some 300 boys and youths, and to a still larger number of girls. Both the Gregorian Armenians and the Catholics attend this establishment; religious instruction is imparted to the members of either communion by teachers of their own persuasion in separate classes. We were told that the yearly income amounted to 14,000 roubles (£1400), exclusive of what was received from the girls; and that this sum included the receipts of the theatre which is attached to this enterprising school. The Russian institution boasts of 300

scholars, of whom 75 per cent are Armenians; it does not possess a branch for girls. On the other hand, it indulges in the modern fashion of technical instruction, a side which does not appear to be cultivated in the Armenian school. Its staff consists of fifteen teachers; a fee of twelve roubles (£1:4s.) a year is levied, but many poor pupils are admitted free. A few boarders are received, whose parents live at a distance; and I may here remark that, except in cases which I shall endeavour to specify, all the schools of which I shall make mention in the following pages are practically day-schools. We were taken to see the churches—commonplace edifices of which the Armenians, with so many examples of noble architecture about them, ought really to be ashamed. The largest of them is called the cathedral, and belongs to the Gregorians; there is also, not far from it, an Armenian Catholic church. West of the cathedral on the hillside—it appears in my illustration —we were shown a second church belonging to the Gregorian community; but I do not remember its name. It was at Akhaltsykh that we were first impressed by the custom of the Armenians to kiss the ground when they face the altar in prayer. Such abject prostration in the dust we had never before witnessed in any Christian church. It was Oriental; it was pathetic—the gesture of a poor *raya* at the feet of his savage lord. . . Last of all we were shown the Court of Justice, where a resident magistrate and visiting judges from Tiflis dispense the law behind a barrier of baize-covered tables beneath a life-size portrait of the Tsar. And that is what we saw of the modern town of Akhaltsykh; I doubt whether there is much more to be seen.

The old town on the left bank presents a striking contrast to its young rival across the water. You gain the bridge and pause for a moment to follow the many-channelled river threading the banks of yellow pebbles in its bed; flowing through a landscape of wild and bare hills, which streams with the garish daylight of the East. The road mounts the slope of the opposite cliff or convexity, which, a little further west, joins the more abrupt ridge of crag and precipice crowned by the battlements of the fortress. In this cliff, with its swelling shapes, soft soil and irregular hummocks, the Armenians have discovered a burrowing-ground exactly suited to their requirements; the gaping apertures of chimneys and windows threaten to engulf the guileless traveller who walks, unwitting, between the houses up the hillside. No vegetation relieves the monotony of the constant hues of ochre, and the tiers

of clay and stone which represent the larger tenements mingle naturally with the stone-strewn surface of the friable earth. We saw two churches; one is administered by the Armenian Catholics, the other, which is situated a little above the first, is a Russian Orthodox church. Besides these larger buildings there are two chapels or prayer-houses, which scarcely attain the dignity of a church. These belong to the Gregorians, and we were told that the Roman Catholics have a small chapel within the precincts of the old town. But what interested us most was the Jewish quarter, with its two spacious synagogues. We admired the simplicity of these airy chambers—in the middle the pulpit, the benches disposed around; and we pictured to ourselves the eager faces of the congregation, upturned from those benches to the grave preacher and mobile to every turn of his discourse. The Jew is a rare creature upon the tableland of Armenia; he finds it difficult to exist by the side of the Armenian, who is his rival in his own peculiar sphere.[1] There is a saying that in cleverness a Jew is equal to two Greeks, a single Armenian to two Jews.

The community gathered round us and almost filled the synagogue, in which we sat and rested for a considerable space. Two distinct types of physiognomy were represented; on the one hand the fat, florid cheeks and thick lips which are so characteristic of the coarser strain of Jew, on the other the cavernous features, wrinkled skin, aquiline nose and penetrating eyes which are the monument of the ancient refinement of the Jewish race. When we contrasted the destitution and even the misery of this quarter with the air of prosperity which the synagogue displayed, it was evident that the community were undergoing a period of adversity, and we enquired the reasons of this decline. They attributed their fallen state to the competition of the Armenians; the Armenians, they said, were good workers and a great people, the Jews few in numbers and isolated. There was nothing left for the poor Jew but to tramp round the villages, carrying his goods upon his back. They must emigrate, they were emigrating. . . . Alas! we thought, to what distant land across the mountains, across the sea, shall the poor Jew wander out? How shall he escape the dangers of the way, with the hand of the Government against him, with hatred and contempt dogging his weary steps?

[1] Eli Smith informs us that at the time of his journey (1830-31) Akhaltsykh was the only place, coming within the range of his enquiry in Turkish Armenia, that contained any Jews (*Missionary Researches*, p. 100).

And the Christianity by our side appeared detestable to us, doubly odious by its want of every Christian virtue and by the mummery of its gaudy symbols and vulgar shows. The Jew carries with him the vastness of Asia, the sublimity of the worship of a single God ; may the nations be fertilised by the powerful intellect and their religions elevated by the high conceptions of the Hebrew race !

The fortress, with which the old town naturally communicates, was to us strictly forbidden ground. Although I urged its worthlessness as a reason why we should be permitted to visit it, Captain Taranoffsky would on no account give way. The mosque, the present church, to which I have already alluded, was of course all that we wanted to see. It stands on the northern side of the fortress enclosure ; the base of the minaret still remains and is crowned by a little cupola to which is affixed a cross. An inscription on the gate by which the court is entered gives as the date of construction the year of the Hegira 1166 (A.D. 1752-53).[1] Dubois informs us that the architect was an Italian ;[2] but Brosset, who says that it was built upon the model of St. Sophia, is silent upon this point. For the character of the interior as it existed before the Russian occupation I may refer the reader to Dubois. The fountain in the centre of the court is supplied by an underground aqueduct which conveys the waters of a limpid spring, some seven miles off.[3]

From the old town we slowly made our way back to the encampment, enjoying the scene, observing the passers-by. Here and there we would meet a group of Russian soldiers in their white tunics, taking their evening stroll. Their large frames, fair hair, shaven faces and coarse features contrasted with the neatness of the Oriental type. Their little eyes, deeply set behind the flat nose, were answered on every side by the glances that proceeded from the large and lustrous eyes of the Armenian race. The sheep and cattle were winding into the town from the meadows, each animal finding its stable for itself.

[1] Brosset, *op. cit.* p. 149. [2] Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 267.
[3] Brosset, *op. cit.* pp 139, 149.

CHAPTER IV

TO AKHALKALAKI

THE distance by road between Akhaltsykh and Akhalkalaki is 66 versts, or nearly 44 miles. The post divides the journey into four stages, of which the shortest is 9, the longest 12 miles. The charges, which, I think, were uniform, whenever we were able to avail ourselves of posting facilities, were three kopeks or farthings per verst for each horse supplied, and twelve kopeks for the carriage between each two stations, said to be a charge for greasing the wheels. In addition, a tax of ten kopeks for the whole journey is levied upon each horse, the proceeds of which are due to Government by the contractors who supply the teams. A victoria may be procured in the larger centres, and for this luxury there is, I believe, no extra charge. Four horses will usually be harnessed to it abreast, and an equal number to the luggage cart.

August 31.—At ten o'clock we left Akhaltsykh on our journey southwards and followed the tripping river on the right bank. It was the same road we had taken for a short distance on our way to Safar, the same aspect of the picturesque site of the town (Fig. 15). Between us and the stream lay the stretch of meadow where the sheep and cattle of the townspeople browse—a grassy plain set in the barren landscape, a rare incident in an Eastern scene. Beyond the water the ground rose in gentle undulations of bank and hummock and hill, the parched and friable surface yellow with stubble or with the exhausted growth of weeds. In the background, some five miles distant, stretched the spurs of the border ranges, scantily wooded along the summits and upon the slopes. On our other hand, towards the south, all prospect was excluded by barren hummocks of crumbling soil.

We had covered about 2½ miles, when before us lay the

junction of the rivers, of the river of Akhaltsykh with the Kur or Ardahan river, for it is known under both names. From their nearer margins to our road extended a stretch of alluvial ground, filling the angle between the two streams. Their further banks are high, and are bordered by hummock hills, a feature most pronounced on the bank of the Kur. The united waters break through the soft hummocks and become engulfed in the rocky barrier of the border ranges—a bold and lofty wall of mountain, partially covered with wood. In the hollow is situated a village with trees and pleasant verdure, an oasis in the sterile landscape around. We were told that its name was Tsinis and that it was inhabited by Mussulmans; beyond it, through the glasses, we discerned the road to Tiflis entering the jaws of the gorge.

Skirting the barren convexities which closed the view on our right hand, and upon slightly higher ground, we gained the left bank of the Kur and proceeded along it for a short space up stream. Leaving on our right a small Armenian village, we then descended to the river-bed; strips of vegetables had been planted along the water, which is here crossed by a strong wooden bridge. The stream was flowing towards us, newly escaped from the narrows, where it is confined by rocky cliffs of forbidding aspect, harbouring a scanty growth of stunted bush. A few poplars lined its immediate margin, and a slender fringe of green. It had a width of some 30 yards at the mouth of the passage, a rapid current, charged with soil and tawny, which divides into several channels and forms a broad and pebbly bed as it issues upon the open plain. After crossing the bridge to the right bank, we passed a Mussulman village where the women were sifting the season's grain.

Our course for the rest of the day lay on this bank of the river; the road leaves the plain and dives into the narrows, where walls of rock enclose the swirling stream. The Kur is following the base of the border ranges, piercing the spurs where they meet the outskirts of the Dochus Punar. In places it has a width of some 50 yards or more, and the eye cannot penetrate the dull depths; but more often it is a narrow and shallow torrent, wreathing and foaming over the rocks. On the left bank, as we passed a break in the mountains, it is joined by the clearer waters of a little tributary, the Uravel, which wound below us at Safar.

The weather was delightful; a cool air, a brilliant sun, a few white clouds floating in the blue. Eagles, a small species, circled

against the heaven or alighted on grisly crags. The sides of these low mountains are composed of a lava, dry and barren, which in places is disposed in layers of conglomerate, like the masonry of a Cyclopean wall. We passed the seventh verst-stone from Akhaltsykh, having covered over 4½ miles. A short space further and we were opposite a Georgian village, placed on the hillside of the left bank.

Between the thirteenth and sixteenth verst-stones (8½ and 10½ miles) the range opens, and is seen, beyond a plain of about half a mile in width, pursuing a direction from south-east towards north-west on the right bank. On our left hand we passed a few miserable houses which, we ascertained, were inhabited by Kurds. We entered a country of bleak hummocks, where barren and yellow hills closed the view. Among such surroundings lies the posting station of Rustav, 18 versts or 12 miles along our road. By half-past twelve o'clock we had changed horses, having arrived a quarter of an hour before.

The characteristics of the landscape between Rustav and Khertvis may be summarised in a few words. For awhile the bare, low mountains again border the river on either side, at no great distance from the shore. But they tend to circle in amphitheatres and to leave a respite of even ground. Little rills descend from the heights above the valleys and give birth to verdure and shade. The further we proceed, these oases increase in extent, enhancing the contrast between sterile, lonely walls of rock, and luscious gardens where bright birds flit through the scene.

Thus on the left bank, shortly after leaving Rustav, the eye was greeted by such welcome relief. A high ridge of grey rock descended to the river, but rich verdure clothed its base. The lower slopes were terraced with plantations of Indian corn, and among the stubble herds of heifers grazed the sweet herbs. Rivulets started from the very summit, where a grove of trees was outlined on the sky. The falling water was diffused into a network of tiny channels, which fed the fertile earth. Such were the outskirts of a Mussulman village, of which the name is Gobet. The foreground, on our side of the river, was strewn with boulders of volcanic rock. Large lizards darted from cranny to cranny, and brilliant birds with blue breasts and yellow collars took wing at our approach.

The note, thus early sounded, attained increasing volume in the valleys of Akhashen, of Aspinja and of Khertvis. The first

is situated some five miles from Rustav, and takes its name from a Mussulman village on the left bank.[1] Akhashen is a characteristic Eastern village; the tenements are built in terraces up the slope, scarcely distinguished from the soil. We admired the bold site and pleasant setting of garden; at our feet, in the fuller light of this open circus, the Kur sent flashes of blue, reflecting the bright zenith, from the transparent surface of its yellow stream. On our left hand we recognised the familiar outline of the border ranges stretching away from south to north.

Next, Aspinja lay before us, an open valley, a bower of trees, water trickling from the hillside and collected in little channels which seamed the floor of fertile earth.[2] We were skirting the gardens of two Mussulman villages, and some of the inhabitants happened to pass by. They looked unhappy; we spoke to one of their number and elicited the usual quantity of doubtful truths. It is certain that all the Mussulmans of the Kur valley are discontented; and these two communities were preparing to emigrate. Mention was made to us of a recent ordinance of the Russian Government under which they would be required to serve in the Russian army, and perhaps to fight against the forces of Islam.[3] Aspinja, which we soon reached, is also inhabited by Mussulmans. The slopes above the village are planted with orchards, and every corner of the little plain is cultivated. Indian corn, tobacco and the stubble of cereals were on all sides present to the eye. It is some distance beyond the oasis to the posting station, a stage of 16 versts (10½ miles) from Rustav.

It was nearly three o'clock when we arrived at this station; luscious water-melons grew in the little garden and relieved the dulness of our mid-day meal. But the smiling landscape lay behind us, long out-distanced; and we were again in the fork of a barren gorge. Low ridges break off to the river in rocky cliffs, which descend to a narrow margin of level ground. From the

[1] Brosset speaks of the church and tower of Akhashen as being remarkable both as an example of composite architecture and for possessing a fine sculptured cross on the door and a figure of St. Theodore on horseback (*Voyage archéologique en Transcaucasie*, St. Petersburg, 1849, 1re livraison, 2me rapport, p. 150).

[2] Neither Dubois (*Voyage autour du Caucase*, Paris 1839-43, vol. ii. p. 330) nor Brosset (*Voy. arch.* 2me rapport, p. 176) has more than passing notices of Aspinja. But Dubois tells us that in his time all the inhabitants spoke Georgian except the mollah, who had recently arrived from Asia Minor. He adds that they were formerly Georgian Christians, and their ancient church still existed in a ruinous condition.

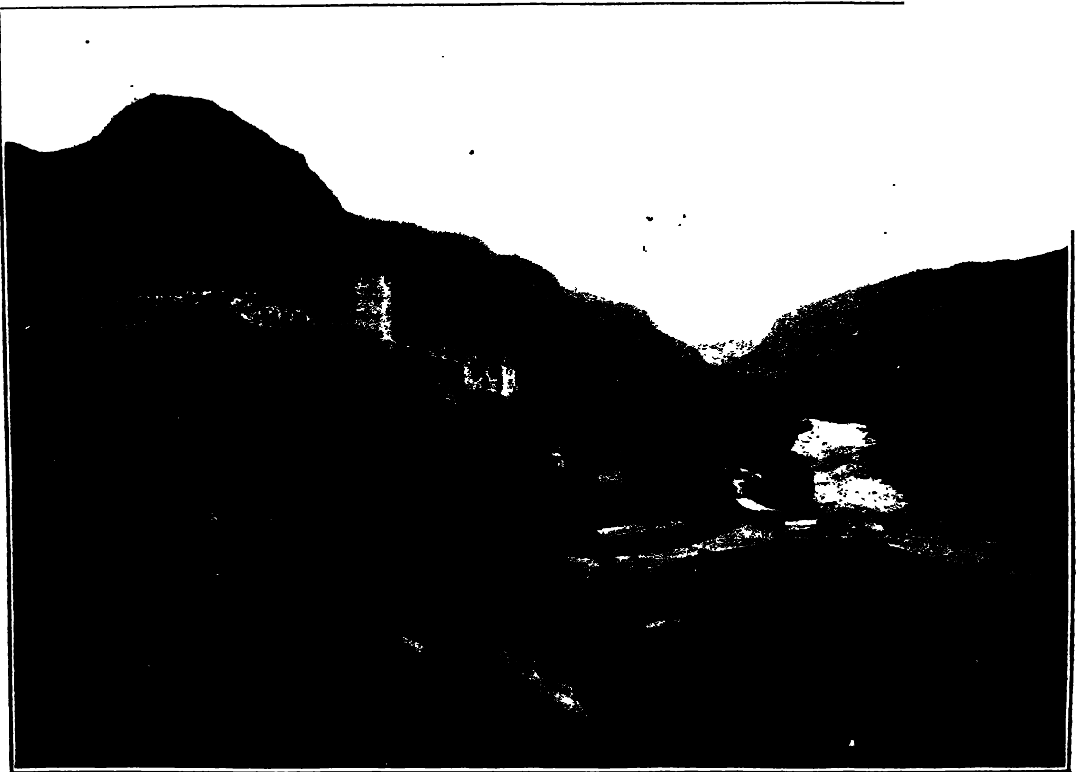
[3] I have not verified their statement, which was repeated in other places, that according to a decree of 1890 they would be liable to military service in ten years after the date of the decree.

valley of Aspinja these uninteresting walls are continued to the outskirts of Khertvis.

Such was the monotonous scene through which the Russian road wound during the course of our afternoon's drive. Beside us raced the river; we faced the current; at short intervals large, loose stones were disposed in the shape of circles in the shallows at no great distance from the shore. We were told that in winter fish are caught within these circles by means of traps placed at opposite sides. In summer the Georgian fisherman trusts to his casting-net, a laborious process which was being pursued by one of the fraternity for the reward of a few small fish. On the opposite bank we were impressed by the proportions of a cliff of lava, of which the face was disposed throughout in spheroidal blocks rising immediately from the water's edge.

At last the landscape opened, the most extensive of these oases, the fertile valley of Khertvis. It is heralded from afar by a line of orchards and by gardens terraced up the slope. A well-planned and elaborate system of aqueducts and channels dispense water on every side. Then the road rises up a hillside and commands a startling scene. Below you, crowning a crag at the confluence of two rivers, a well-preserved example of a mediæval castle on a large scale lifts its towers against a background of lofty cliffs (Fig. 16). A village cowers at the foot of the fortress, almost hidden by dense trees. Such is the castle and township of Khertvis, situated at the junction of the river of Akhalkalaki with the Kur. The road follows the right bank of the first of these streams, and the station is some distance from the town. We were obliged to leave the carriage and entrust our effects to the villagers, who carried them down the steep sides of the high cliff. It was six o'clock; we crossed the river of Akhalkalaki by a little footbridge, and pitched our tents on the floor of a shady garden, not far from the margin of the Kur.

A motley group of people collected about us; of what race, of what faith? Mussulmans! We expected and received the answer, although there was little except our knowledge of the checkered history of these valleys to indicate their adhesion to Islam. The owner of the garden bore the name of Bin Ali Bey Vishnadzi, and was of mixed Georgian and Turkish blood; he stands in the centre of my illustration, in Cossack dress, with his cap on one side (Fig. 17). His cast of countenance is Georgian, and the hair is somewhat fair; yet his uncle, Hasan Bey, has the



F CAST OF KHERTV

Turkish type. His mixed ancestry is no exception among the villagers, and they all call themselves Turks. Their number was given to me as 1500, with 200 houses; the Russian census, which classes them as Georgians, bears out these figures as approximately correct.[1] Among them are a handful of Armenian Christians; the old man with a staff, seated in the foreground of my picture, was our guide from the road to our pleasant camping-ground, and belonged to the Armenian race.

If reliance can be placed on the figure given by Dubois, the



FIG. 17. GROUP OF VILLAGERS AT KHERTVIS.

population of Khertvis has almost doubled since 1833.[2] However this may be, the township is now in full decline; misery was written in the faces of a great part of the inhabitants, of whom many were preparing to leave Russian soil. As we passed through the streets, between the tumble-down houses, we observed that some of the shops had been permanently closed. Is it their unfitness to flourish under systematic government? Or the policy of the Russian Government to discourage Mussulmans, with their Turkish sympathies, or some special causes which we were unable to ascertain? Our stay was too short to sift fact from fable; and

[1] 229 houses, with 1360 inhabitants (Family lists of 1886).
[2] He gives a population of 800 souls (*op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 304).

a rigid reticence was observed by the leading people, who were evidently under the influence of fear.[1]

The river of Akhalkalaki, or the Toporovan river, as it is sometimes called, enters the valley from a little north of east. It appeared to us to contain as much water as the Kur, into which it swirled.[2] The united streams for a short space pursue a westerly direction until they settle to a normal course towards the north. The affluent washes the northern side of the castled rock, which protects a tongue of alluvial ground at its southern base. On this land is situated the little township, embowered in leafy groves. The castle dates from a remote period; and even the present structure is ancient, although it belongs to different epochs. The citadel with the little chapel, occupying the summit of the perpendicular rock, is a work of the middle of the fourteenth century, when the Georgian atabegs were the lords of the land; the remaining portion, with its several towers, is more modern.[3] We ourselves were unable to visit the edifice, which we were never tired of admiring from the river-bed. Behind it soar the walls of volcanic material, where the younger have been forced through the older lavas and have produced fantastic contortions of the rocks.[4]

September 1.—From Khertvis we made an excursion up the valley of the Kur to the crypts of Vardzia, situated on the left bank, some nine miles above the confluence with the Toporovan. For the greater part of the journey, which is performed on ponies, you follow the right bank of the river, along a path which in many places becomes a mere track. We had soon left the shady groves behind us, our clever little ponies often obliged to pick their footsteps, where an outcrop of rock or blocks of fallen stone obstructed the margin of level ground. On either bank, beyond this margin, high hills enclose the narrow valley; here and there

[1] Dubois (*op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 298, 299) informs us that the Mussulmans of these districts are the old Georgian inhabitants whom Safar Pasha compelled to embrace Islam in 1625. He adds that the Armenians escaped this persecution, having been accorded by the reigning Sultan liberty of conscience, like the Jews in France under similar conditions.

The river Kur is essentially a Georgian river, even where it traverses districts which belong geographically to the Armenian tableland. For the history and character of the country about its upper course one may usefully consult the works of Dubois and Brosset already cited in this chapter, and Koch's *Reise im pontischen Gebirge*, Weimar, 1846.

[2] Dubois (*op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 314) calls the Kur a torrent above Khertvis, and says it only becomes a river after the junction with the Toporovan river.

[3] I must refer the reader to Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 302 *seq.*, and Brosset, *Voy. arch.* p. 152.

[4] So Abich explains the phenomena (*Geologische Forschungen in den kaukasischen Ländern*, part iii. p. 31).

with naked crags, more generally with stone-strewn slopes, harbouring a scanty growth of parched grass. No oasis, not a sign of a human being, no visible animal life. The landscape streaming with light, and the brawling Kur breaking over the boulders which encumber its bed. But the climate was delicious, and the blue zenith was flaked with luminous cloud.

After over an hour's ride in this confined valley, we reached the ruins of a fort, or small castle, and issued upon more open ground. The valley expands on the right bank of the river in an irregular series of hill and dale. We passed the rush-grown banks of a little lake, so blue and clear that it lay like a jewel on the waste. It is called Sülük, or lake of leeches; and Hasan Bey, our guide, told us that leeches abound. In a hollow on the further side of this lake we came upon the gardens of the Mussulman village of Margistan. Beyond this oasis, and beyond the open ground about us, we could see the valley contracting, the river flowing through a gorge, overhung by perpendicular cliffs; and we were shown our path climbing the side of the cliff and entering the jaws of the gorge.

We had crossed or skirted the volcanic circus, with the lake in the extinct crater, of which Dubois has furnished us with a learned account.[1] Before us lay the defile through the gigantic dam of volcanic mountain which has opened, as if by miracle, to the puny stream.

Soon we are winding along that path, about at mid-height of the cliffs, the river brawling far beneath us, a tortuous thread of foam. It is a remarkable scene, a freak of Nature on a large scale, of which none of us, at least, has seen the like. The volcanic layers have been split by vertical fissures, and huge masses of conglomerate rock tower high above us, almost separated from the mountain side. Their masonry of cemented blocks gives them the appearance of castles, the work of a more than human hand; they threaten to tumble headlong into the valley, a fate to which some have already succumbed. They remind me of the Devil's city of Montpellier-le-Vieux, in the Cevennes country—a mere sprite's village by their side. The dark colour of the rocks, the gloom of the passage, the height of the cliffs, soaring from the twilight in the hollow to jagged summits some 500 to 600 feet

[1] Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 308 *seq.*; Brosset, *Voy. arch.* 2me rapport, p. 165, who gives an account of the adjacent church of Tsunda; and Abich, *op. cit.* part iii. p. 34. I would refer my reader to the last of these writers for an account of the geology of the gorge of Zeda Tmogvi (part iii. pp. 35, 36).

above the gulf, all contribute to enhance the impression of mystery and to suggest the presence of a prince of fiends.

Opposite us, on the left bank, the bold outline of the fish-backed ridge is crowned with the ruinous remains of masonry, barely distinguished from the rock. A long line of crumbling edifices marks the site of a considerable fortress; in the depths beneath, at the foot of the perpendicular mountain, a wall descends the last slope to the margin of the water and cuts off access to the valley from the river-bed. A few miserable huts are seen in the hollow: who could inhabit such a weird and lonely spot? Kurds, they say, as though they were no human beings—a lingering remnant of Turkish times. The ruins are the relics of Zeda Tmogvi, a stronghold famous in the history of these lands.[1]

Beyond this gorge the valley opens and resumes the more normal character of a torrent bordered by lofty hillsides. The further you proceed, the floor of the hollow is covered by richer verdure, while a grove of fruit trees spreads shade. Are they wild or were they planted? The extreme loneliness of the scene was scarcely broken by a sign of human life. We forded the Kur, and, after winding through these orchards of the river margin, doubled a projecting spur of the valley wall. We were at the foot of a perpendicular cliff which displayed irregular rows of gaping caves at a considerable height above the river-bed. These grottoes have been cut in the face of a layer of volcanic rock of extraordinary smoothness and of flesh-coloured hue. The layer does not extend to the summit of the cliff, which is composed of a conglomerate with greyish tints (Fig. 18).

It was Vardzia, a troglodyte city of a remote antiquity, which the Georgians and Armenians believe to have been founded in the twelfth century by the father of Queen Thamar, and to have been completed by that princess. They say it was a favourite residence of Thamar; you are shown the cave in which she resided during winter, the terrace where she spent the summer days, the chapel where her brilliant court assembled, even, it is affirmed, the tomb where her remains were placed. This last object had evidently escaped the knowledge of the resident priest, although Dubois has sought to establish its identity with a curious structure which he found in the little sacristy on the

[1] Brosset is not quite sure about it (*Voy. arch.* 2me rapport, p. 165). The governor of Akhalkalaki had no doubt about the correctness of the identification.

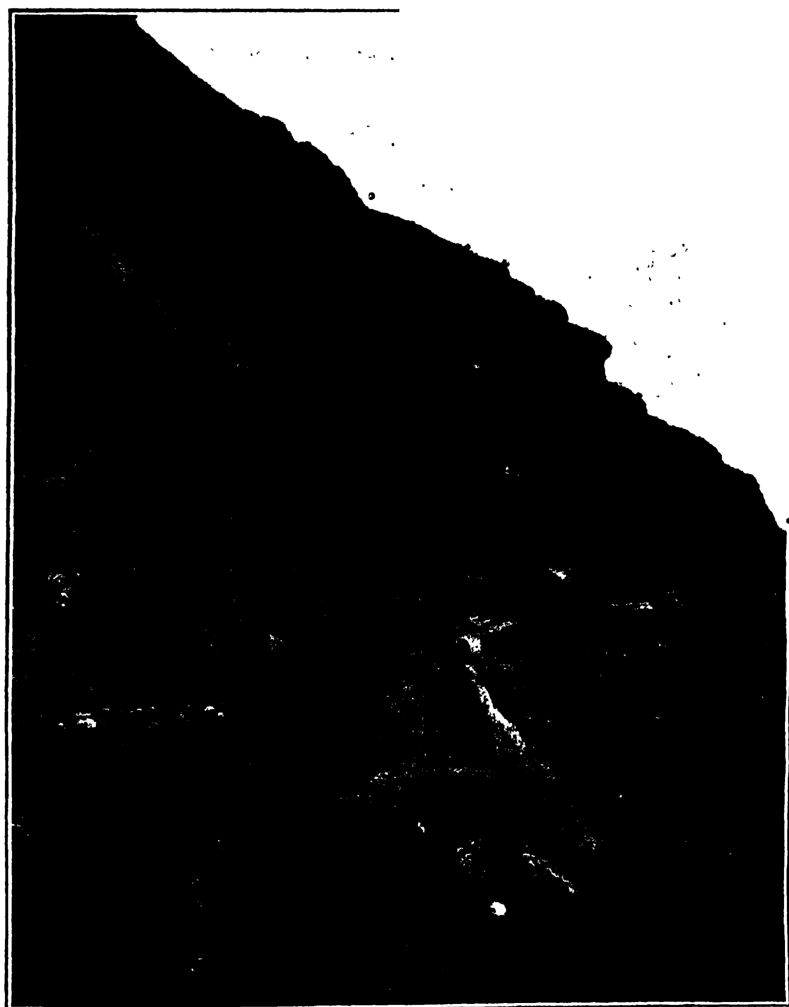


Fig. 18. Vardzia, the Troglodyte City.

inner side of the church.[1] Vardzia is, in fact, the city of Thamar, just as every castle in Georgia is the castle of Thamar and every antiquity a relic of the great queen.

We picked our way among the boulders up the steep side of the cliff until it became a perpendicular wall. There commence the irregular horizontal rows of caves, stretching eastwards, where the escarpments are most abrupt. A narrow path ends at a polygonal structure of which the roof has fallen off. This edifice is either modern or has been extensively restored; it forms a gateway and seals the approach to the caves. The gate passed, you stand on a level footway, partly hollowed in the rock and partly supported by rude masonry, which takes advantage of the inequalities of the cliff-side. In the steepest places this footway is tunnelled through the rock, and it can, of course, be barricaded at any point. Thus it would appear that Vardzia is inaccessible to siege, at least by any of the usual means. But one remembers that Timur employed an ingenious contrivance to reduce the Georgians, when they fled to their caves. From the heights above he suspended wooden stages, from which his warriors leapt into the crowded grottoes or scattered fire among the panic-stricken foe. Vardzia itself is said to have been taken by this conqueror, by what methods I do not know.

We were met by an old archimandrite and his deacon, the only inhabitants of this long-deserted place (Fig. 19). They are supported by the occasional contributions of pilgrims, who visit the church in great numbers at certain times. Both were sunk to an equal degree in abysmal ignorance, and the deacon was so shy in manner and movement, he seemed a half-tamed creature of the rocks. I asked them the meaning of the name Vardzia, which, according to Dubois, signifies, both in Georgian and Armenian, the fortress of the roses. They derived it from *zia*, which means uncle, and *vard*, I am here. They stoutly maintained this extraordinary derivation, in face of the doubt which we displayed.

We passed along the footway for some distance, with grottoes above us and beneath. Then we came to an imposing vaulted

[1] Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 319; and see also Brosset, Atlas (plate xii.) to the *Voyage archéologique* and text, pp. 163 *seq.* I shall not attempt to reconcile the text of Brosset with his plan of the church, his plan with that of Dubois, or the measurements of either with my own. My own measurements at Vardzia and throughout the journey were made by myself with a long tape-measure which I always carried with me. The height of the church is given by Dubois as 40 feet.

balcony, of which the inner side and roof are hollowed in the rock, and the other parts are built up with masonry. The footway forms the floor of this balcony, which looks important when seen from below. The vaulted ceiling is adorned with old frescos, which are in a state of advanced decay. A doorway opens from



FIG. 19. ARCHIMANDRITE AND DEACON AT VARDZIA.

the inner wall to a spacious cave—an oblong area with an arched roof, disposed in the familiar shape of a simple nave and apse. This church has a length of 46 feet 3 inches and a breadth of 27 feet. For decoration it depends upon richly-coloured frescos, some of which may still be seen. In the apse are depicted Mary and the infant Christ; on the Virgin's right is placed a female aureoled figure, clad in white and with embroidered bands. On a pilaster, left of the apse, you discern the features of a woman

whose dark complexion impresses the eye. It seems an Egyptian type; she has been honoured with an aureole; the old priest declared the portrait to be Queen Thamar's, but he was almost certainly in error. In the panel of the arch, which lies beyond, a king and queen are represented, aureoled, their hands extended towards a stage upon which are seated the Virgin and Child. An angel is flying towards the Virgin, bearing an object the nature of which we were unable to ascertain. A passage leads from the church to an adjoining chamber, in which the articles of value are preserved. Dubois informs us that above this church, and as it were a second storey, a second temple has been hewn of equal size. A subterranean passage connects it with the sacristy; and this same passage tunnels the cliff and debouches at the caves where the wine of the city was made and stored, and which are situated in an adjoining gorge. Dubois, who discovered this passage, found it blocked with débris and in disuse; its existence was not mentioned to ourselves.

Beyond the church we were taken to the apartments of Queen Thamar, which are situated further to the east. On our way we were shown a cave which must have served as a bath-chamber; an oblong well has been sunk into the floor. In the recess behind, a broad drain is visible, said to be the receptacle of the water-vessels. We also noticed a grotto which displayed a number of hewn pigeon-holes, and which had probably served the requirements of a chemist's shop.

The queen's grotto is a spacious vaulted chamber, 32 feet 4 inches in length, 20 feet 1 inch in breadth, and some 14 feet in height. A doorway gives access to this interior, and there is a small aperture or window on either side. On the opposite wall, and towards its right corner, you see a communicating apartment of much smaller dimensions; and to the left of this recess has been hewn an arched niche with a depth of over 4 feet. Several smaller niches adorn the chamber, of which a feature is a low divan, cut at the foot of each wall, a continuous ledge only 13 inches broad. On the right of the entrance, in the wall which runs at right angles, is situated another small apartment, lit by an aperture on its outer side. It may be that these smaller chambers served as sleeping-places; the ingenious Dubois boldly assumes that the first was a wardrobe and the second a kind of boudoir. In the floor are several hollow spaces, as usual in these caves. Above the grotto is situated the so-called summer

apartment—an open cave issuing upon a terrace from which a fine view is obtained.

But what impressed us more than the caves and their associations was the solitude of the place, the sense of extreme remoteness—some pulseless corner, as it seemed, of the living world. A torrent winding between grave cliffs, covered with a scanty growth of parched herbage; no runnel diffusing life, and by our side the precious water collected in a cistern with a floor of cement. Where are the vineyards which must once have clothed the lower slopes, protected by the walls of the volcanic valley against the rigorous climate of a region over 4000 feet above the sea? Nature had blighted the scene with layers of lava and cinders; man reclaimed the spot with laborious patience, until the work perished under the curse of his fellow-man. But what enemy would penetrate to this hidden valley, concealed behind the most inaccessible zone of the border mountains, defended by the Devil's gorge? Perhaps the appearance of the opposite cliff affords a clue to this mystery. It is higher than the summit which towers immediately above *you*; the outline is horizontal and the edge flat. It is in fact an exposed rim of the great tableland, broken here by the cañon of the Kur. A series of plains extend hence to the furthest skirts of Persia, vague divisions of a single elevated stage.[1]

The afternoon was far advanced as we retraced our steps to our encampment, and night already rested in the gorge. We were disappointed of a photograph of its solemn horrors, and made our way in silence beneath the twilight, following the murmuring stream. On the following day we proceeded to Akhalkalaki up the valley of the Toporovan. The posting station of Abazbek, 14 versts from Aspinja, is situated some distance up the valley, and the stage between it and Akhalkalaki is one of 18 versts or 12 miles. It was between these points that we travelled for the first time in a *brichka*, or springless posting cart. The drive occupied about three hours, and the road, which was well constructed, mounted continuously, following

[1] In taking leave of Vardzia may I refer the reader to the excellent description of Dubois. He mentions the existence of a third and smaller church, which he says is adorned with ancient frescos, with inscriptions which are all in the Greek language. The frescos are in the Byzantine style, and cannot be much later than the middle of the eleventh century. Brosset, who also saw this chapel, maintains, on the other hand, that all the inscriptions are in the Georgian ecclesiastical character; he adds that there is a Greek inscription disposed about the emblems of a Calvary in an adjoining niche (*Voy. arch.* 2me rapport, p. 106).

and fronting the swirling current of the Toporovan. The gardens of Khertvis extend for some distance beyond the castle, and a portion of the township lies upon this side. Then the margin of the river contracts to the verge of disappearance, and stony cliffs, with an elevation of about 200 feet, border the water on either bank. It is in fact a deep crack in the surface of the plateau, upon which the town of Akhalkalaki stands. Not a village did we pass, or any oasis among the rocks; it was indeed a bleak scene. But the sky, flaked in places with wandering white clouds, was intensely clear and blue, and the foaming river refreshed the scene. After passing the low edifice of the castle of Akhalkalaki, which lines the edge of the cliff on the left bank, we crossed to that bank by a wooden bridge and wound slowly up the hillside. It was evident that we had arrived almost at the head of the formation, the point where the watercourse descends from the surface of the plateau and eats deeply into the volcanic soil. It was almost night when we reached the level summit of the cliff and breathed the crisper air. A place was found for our tents in an open space of the little town, which is situated at an elevation of 5545 feet above the sea.

CHAPTER V

AT AKHALKALAKI

AT Akhalkalaki we had reached a country which is peopled in large preponderance by the Armenian race. The town is the centre of an administrative division (*ouezde*), which is dependent upon the Government of Tiflis. This division is partitioned into two administrative districts, of which the most northerly takes its name from the village of Baralet, on the way to Lake Tabizkhuro; while the more southerly is called the district of Bogdanovka, a Russian settlement on the road to Alexandropol. The population of the division amounts to a total, according to the published statistics, of 59,500 souls; or, according to the figures which were kindly communicated to me by the Governor, of 66,000 souls. The numbers of the Armenians are given in the first of these lists as over 42,000, a proportion of seven-tenths of the whole; while in the Governor's list, which, I presume, is the most recent, they are censused at 58,000, a proportion of seven-eighths. I am inclined to place more reliance on the total furnished by the Governor than upon his subdivision according to race; and I shall conclude that the Georgians contribute a sixth of the inhabitants and the Russian settlers something less than a tenth. These figures do not comprise the town of Akhalkalaki, which, out of a total population of something over 4000, contains 4000 Armenian inhabitants.[1]

Be they immigrants or aboriginal, the character of their surroundings is in harmony with the instincts of their race. A vast and elevated plain upon which the snow lies in winter and a southern sun shines. A fertile volcanic soil, abounding in

[1] The published total of 59,496 is made up as follows:--Armenians, 42,301; Georgians, 9771; Russians, 6617; Kurds, 689; others, 118 (official statistics based on the lists of 1886, Tiflis 1893). It is noticeable that the Governor's list places the Russians at 6300, a diminution since 1886.

springs and favourable to cereals of every kind. Measured from north-east to south-west, the plain of Akhalkalaki has a length of nearly forty miles;[1] its latitudinal extension may be gauged by the course of the Kur on the west, and, on the east, by that of the stream which issues from Lake Madatapa and skirts the outworks of the eastern meridional range. The plain is situated at an altitude which ranges between 5500 and 7000 feet. The soil, when exposed by the plough, is black in colour, or, perhaps, dark chocolate, and reveals the influence of the lavas below. The extreme evenness of the surface is due to the fluid nature of these lavas, which streamed, at a comparatively recent period, from fissures at the southern base of the Trialethian Mountains and from vents at other points of the mountain girdle which encircles the flat expanse. On the floor of the plain itself the effects of volcanic action are visible in the forms of hummock and rounded hill. Volcanic emissions have produced the lap-like enclosures which are the reservoirs of the lonely lakes. Their waters are fed by springs from beneath the surface, and by copious rains from the clouds of the Pontic region, which fly the topmost bulwarks of the tableland and distil on the western slopes of the meridional volcanic barrier, the limit on the east of the even ground. From Agrikar to Karakach is the section of this barrier along which this process of condensation is most pronounced; the mountains are known by the natives under the collective name of *Mokri Gori*, the wet mountains. The principal stream, besides the Kur, is that which issues from Lake Toporovan, and, descending south, flows through Lake Tuman. After emerging on the southern shore, it receives an affluent from Lake Madatapa, and pursues a northerly course. Where we arrived upon its margin, half an hour south of Akhalkalaki, it was a nice flash of water, flowing slowly over the surface of the plateau. Below the town it is joined on the left bank by a stream which has descended from the northern slopes of the Chaldir Hills; and further west, on the right bank, by the river of Samsar, which brings the drainage of the north-easterly arm of the plain and flows in a deeply eroded bed.[2]

[1] The plain has a gulf-like extension or arm on the side of Lake Tabizkhuro. Coming from the lake, Radde estimated that the plain proper commences at the village of Kestano, which I take to be the Bejano of the Russian map, and that this village lay some 1000 feet lower than the level of the lake. The plain would therefore have an altitude of 5650 feet at its north-eastern extremity. From Bejano to the south-western shore of Lake Khozapin is a direct distance on the map of thirty-six miles.

[2] Radde in *Petermann's Mitth.* 1876, p. 143.

At Akhalkalaki the Toporovan is bordered by lofty cliffs, a cañon or trough which has the appearance of a sinuous crack in the surface of the plain. Gaining the summit of either cliff, you stand on level ground, with a flat or undulating country sweeping around you to the distant limits of the mountain chains. You breathe a keener air when you emerge from the narrow valley; the town is placed at a little distance from the edge of the cliff which rises along the left bank. But how present my reader with a picture of a settlement which is nothing more than an agglomeration of one-storeyed, flat-roofed houses, placed, as it were at random, on the floor of the plain? It seemed ridiculous to focus the camera at such an insignificant object—the flat roofs, with their covering of withered turf, repeating and lifting the texture and colour of the ground. Moreover Akhalkalaki is a fortress; the camera is interdicted--a happy thought in this particular case. Fortress-spying would be a poor amusement in this country; like the fleet of Spain, they are so extremely difficult to detect. The old castle above the river has been restored and converted into a barrack; a similar purpose is served by some stone buildings in the environs of the town. I do not know that the god of war is otherwise represented; but greater honour has been paid to the demigods of justice, and the Governor remarked to me—what was indeed sufficiently evident —that the prison on the outskirts was the only two-storeyed edifice in the place. Just a house or two, including that of the Governor, had been provided with a roofing of metal sheets, painted a pleasant red. But all the tenements appeared well built, of solid stone masonry; and the street or two which the place contains were certainly spacious, although ill-maintained and deep in dust. When we arrived, we were greeted by a chorus of the pariah dogs, as though we were entering a purely Eastern town. Still there are a few modern shops, notably a large drapery establishment, where the necessaries of civilised life may be procured. A feature were the wooden hoods on the tops of the houses, a feature not uncommon in the towns of Armenia; they serve as screens to the apertures of the chimneys, and appear a dangerous contrivance to European eyes. Such was our impression of the aspect and character of Akhalkalaki, the *new fortress*. Vague tracks lead away into the surrounding country, which is bare and bleak in the immediate neighbourhood of the settlement.

In addition to the principal avenue of outside communication by way of Akhaltsykh and the passage of Borjom, the town is connected with Georgia by a road which crosses the Trialethian Mountains and debouches by a short cut at the last-named place. We were shown this road, where it mounts the cliff on the right bank of the river, as we crossed to the left bank. Leaving Lake Tabizkhuro on the right, it mounts to the spine of the system, which it crosses by a pass of about 8000 feet.[1] Tiflis may no doubt be reached by the valley of the Khram, but I have no information upon the nature of the route. Metalled roads are scarce in these distant provinces; it may surprise the reader to learn that the road we travelled over from Akhaltsykh was only completed in 1892. During all those previous years of Russian occupation the post was carried from the important centre of Alexandropol to foreign countries along a stony track in the valley of the Toporovan.

Akhalkalaki has belonged to Russia since the campaign of 1828, when it was taken under Marshal Paskevich by assault. It was not the first time that Russian troops had entered the fortress; it had fallen in 1812 to the arms of General Kutlerusky, who marched from Gori and took the garrison by surprise. In the time of Paskevich the defenders were a determined body of men, recruited from among the most warlike of the inhabitants of these countries, and serving in their own land and under their own chiefs. Flushed by the fall of Kars, the general appeared before the place and summoned the Turkish commander to submit. His emissaries received the reply that the women and children had been removed, and that the men were determined to die at their posts. They numbered 1000, with fourteen cannon; and they reminded the Russians of the proverb that one soldier of the province of Akhaltsykh was equal to two of Kars and three from Erivan. Red standards were displayed on the walls, and, during the progress of the siege, the garrison was heard making the responses to the mollah, who led their prayers from the gallery of the minaret and who had himself sworn to share their fate. A Cossack officer stepped forth and endeavoured to parley with them; he fell, pierced by a number of bullets. No opposition was offered to the establishment of the batteries; no attempt appears to have been made to outwit the foe. The Russian

[1] Radde is almost certainly in error in making the pass of Karakaya, which is the shortest route, over 9500 feet high (*Petermann's Mitth.*, 1876, p. 141).

cannon beat down the walls, their rifle fire decimated the defenders, following them from wall to wall. Paskevich then gave the order to cease firing, and called upon them afresh to submit. The old answer was returned; the assault was sounded; nor were the Cossacks appeased and the honour of the defenders satisfied until six hundred of the men of Akhaltsykh had eaten the dust.[1]

At the time of our visit Colonel Tarasoff was civil governor of the town and administrative division; he received us with the utmost courtesy. We would leave our tent to join his hospitable family circle, to discuss the many interesting features of the country and to drink endless glasses of delicious tea. We learnt that the road to Akhaltsykh had been made under his directions; Greek workmen performed the blasting and stone-cutting, while for the levelling forced labour was employed. The road is the property of the Russian Government, and horses are provided by contractors to carry the post. The administration is conducted on a primitive but common-sense principle: a head man in every village, responsible to a head of a group of villages, who is again answerable to the Governor himself. Besides police—among whom the Armenians are prominent, their fierce faces belying the reputed meekness of the race—Colonel Tarasoff has a force of Cossacks at his disposal; and it is of course open to him to send for the troops of the district, should any special emergency arise. In addition to the Governor, there is in each larger town a resident judicial officer, who dispenses justice *ex contractu* as well as *ex delicto*, and whose judgments are subject to revision at assize.

As usual in the Armenian provinces, the need of elementary education is supplied from a double source. Foremost in the field are the Armenians, with a separate organisation; the Russian State school is not so well attended, and, in this province, is probably not so well served. Yet the Russian principal impressed me as a capable and, certainly, as a most amiable individual; he was a Georgian, speaking Georgian as his native language; his wife and family affected the Georgian dress. His pupils consisted of 150 boys and youths, all, or almost all, Armenians. The school supplies a kind of secondary education as well as the elementary course. Of this privilege to its rival the Armenian school was justly jealous; it is only allowed the two primary

[1] Monteith (*Kars and Erzeroum*, pp. 85, 168, 173 *seq.*). Haxthausen informs us that "not one Turk accepted his life—every man remained dead upon the spot" (*Transcaucasia*, p. 100). He had received the story in this truly Oriental form.

classes, which the scholars complete in their twelfth year. The roll consisted of 250 boys and no less than 300 girls. A reading-room and library were attached to the institution, and it was evident that the teachers were men of greater attainments than are required by the kind of instruction they are supposed to dispense.

I sat with Colonel Tarasoff in his Court, a well-ordered building, in which he is wont to reverse the procedure of his classical prototypes. Enter to us an old turbaned Mohammedan; status, mollah of doubtful fame. He has come to Akhalkalaki with the object of collecting money wherewith to purchase sacred books. But only the chief mollah has the right to take subscriptions for this purpose; and where is the written authorisation in favour of this mendicant, bearing the seal of the most holy man? Enough, that he cannot produce it; he must desist from his collection. He must be silent: the next case is called.

Enter a roughly-clad Georgian peasant, a lean figure, a dejected mien. He has been staying overnight at a village in the district, and has been robbed of three cows. The Governor has given orders that they must immediately be restored to him; two have been returned, he cannot recover the third. Decided that the village itself must pay the full equivalent; a look of delighted surprise lights the poor man's eyes.

Enter a Georgian of the middle class who impresses us as a stupid fellow; but he brings a highly original plaint. It appears that he has fallen out with his brother, and that they both occupy the same house. They have separated their goods and do not speak to one another. Complainant applies to the Governor to order his brother to open a separate door. I can scarcely refrain from betraying my host by a peal of laughter; he knits his brows and dismisses the case with a volley of hard words.

Enter a young man, one of two brothers who live together and share a common employ. It so happens that both have been summoned to perform military service; may one of them be exempt? Supporters of families are excused, and the conscription in Transcaucasia is as yet conducted on a very small scale. Still the Colonel upholds the summons; the service covers a short period, and will do both brothers good.

CHAPTER VI

PROSPECT FROM ABUL

EAST of the town of Akhalkalaki, which almost touches the long train of the western slope, a bold mass of mountain features the landscape, square-seated on the floor of the plateau (Fig. 20). It rises to a height of nearly 11,000 feet; but this imposing altitude is shorn of half its grandeur by the lofty levels of the adjacent plain (5500-6000 feet). Still the mountain overpowers all the surrounding outlines; the summit overlooks the neighbouring heights. When we had issued from the chasm of the Toporovan river and gained the surface of the plateau, our first thought was to ascend this elevated viewing-stage, and command the flat expanse, bordered by dim and distant ranges, which was now unfolded before us on every side.

Horses were impressed on the morning after our arrival to take us to the foot of the higher slopes. We were informed that it was necessary to make the half-circuit of the mountain and to start climbing on the eastern side. But why reject the tempting gradients of the nearer western slope, sweeping towards you with a succession of harmonious curves? Yet where obtain a satisfactory answer to this question? The actual experiment might involve the loss of a day. So we bowed to the decision of our native conductor, and became reconciled to the long ride. Mile after mile the great plain stretched to the westward, a solid sea, patched in places with fallow and stubble, but treeless, without a hedge, without a boundary of any kind. We were approaching the stony confines of the mountainous zone which borders the plateau on the east. The wretched village of Abul rears its stacks of cow-dung fuel among a waste of stones.

Seen from the side of Akhalkalaki, the mountain presents the appearance of a composite mass. A long trough mounts to

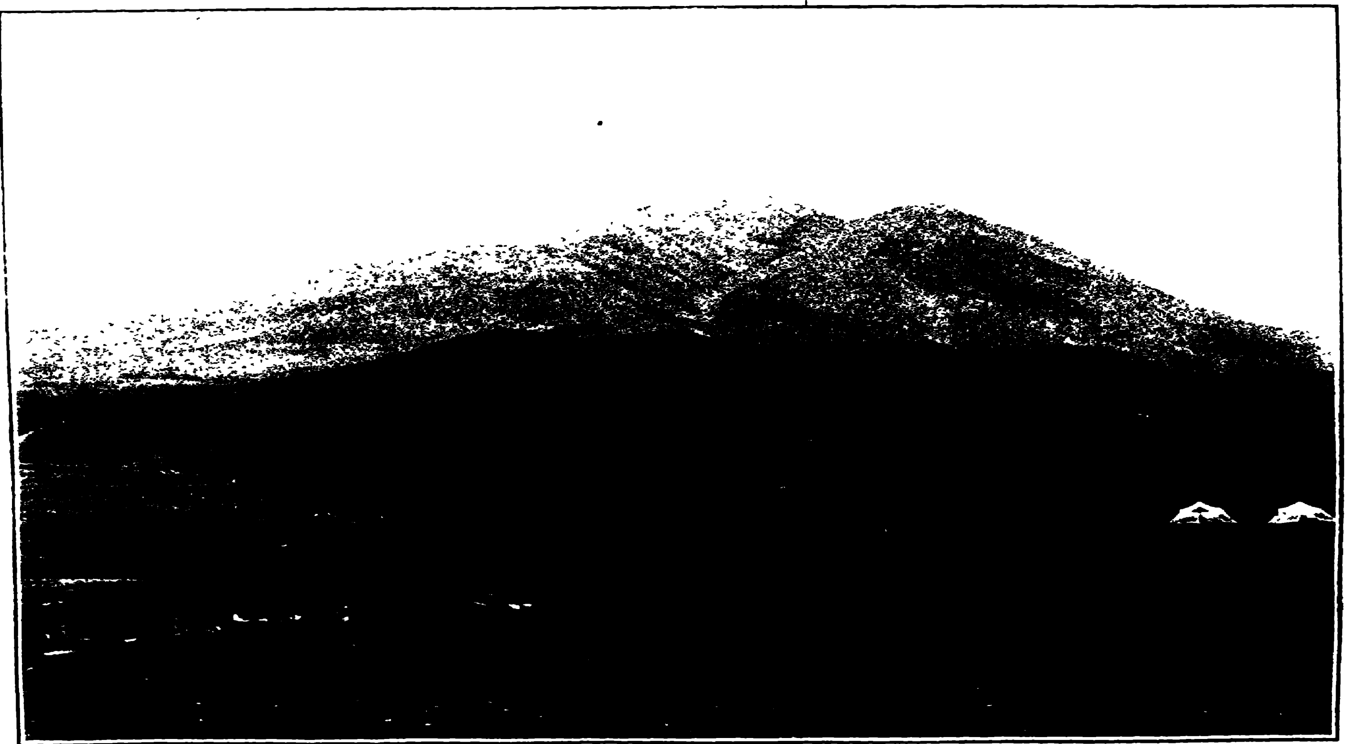


FIG 29. MOUNT ABUL FROM AKHALKALAKI.

the summit region, dividing the fabric into two halves. Each half is crowned by a well-defined summit; that on the south is single of form and considerably lower, its loftier neighbour on the north appears to possess two peaks. In reality this double peak conceals a third fang, which is prominent on the eastern side. The three-fanged summit communicates with its less elevated neighbour by a lofty *col*, the uppermost edge of the trough. The slopes of Abul display the volcanic origin of the mountain, and descend in long-drawn outlines to the plain. The lengthiest declines westwards from the more northerly summit, and has the shape of a long back or ridge. The steepest is the slope just beneath this summit, facing north; it is inclined at an angle of 30 degrees. The village of Abul is situated to the south of the western slope, and would present a convenient starting-point from which its easy gradients might be scaled. Our guide, however, assured us, I cannot conceive upon what foundation, that the ascent would occupy two days. So we left the village to skirt the base of the southern half of the mountain, of which the sides have a gradient of 18 degrees. Rounding the mass, we were able to reach on horseback some grassy uplands of the further slopes. This favourable nature of the ground extends to a considerable elevation, and had probably been the inducement which had influenced our leader to bring us such a long way. From these pastures it was a climb of one and a half hours over the rocks to the pinnacles of the loftiest and most northerly mass. We sent the horses back, with directions to meet us on the further side, since we had decided to descend by the western ridge.

Throughout the length and breadth of the Armenian highlands, themselves the loftiest section of the bridge of Asia between India and the Mediterranean Sea, there is perhaps no summit, with the possible exception of that of Ararat, which possesses a prospect at once so distant, so extensive and so full of interest as that which expands on every side from the triple peak of Abul.[1] You stand on a stage which commands the fabric of the nearer Asia, without dwarfing the proportions of the majestic structure, without confusing the varied members of the vast design.

[1] Abich calls it "das am weitesten umfassende des armenischen Hochlandes" with the exception of the view from Ararat (*Geologische Forschungen in den kaukasischen Landern*, Vienna, 1887, part iii. p. 39). But few have been or probably ever will be privileged to reach the summit of the *mother of the world* under conditions entirely favourable to such a panorama. And from such a height the world appears very insignificant.

The tableland with its open landscapes is unfolded before you, swelling and falling from plain to hummock, from hummock to rounded ridge, from vaulted ridge to the soaring arcs of an Alagoz and an Ararat, crowned with perpetual snow. The troubled outlines of the border ranges encircle the mysterious scene; and, far away, from a gloomy background to this full sunlight and radiant atmosphere, lurid flashes are reflected through layers of murky vapour by the snows of Caucasus, infinitely high.

The detail of the landscape engages the mind with the same engrossing fascination as the panorama impresses the sense. From west right round to south, vast tracts of level ground are outspread at your feet. Here and there the plain is broken by barren convexities, of which the outlines mingle with the outlines of the surrounding chains. No wood or leafy hedgerows dull the mobile surface, which is responsive to every mood of the sky. But a large area is checkered with black and yellow patches—alternate fallow and stubble-field and standing corn. The reclamation extends to the slopes and recesses of the neighbouring mountains, struggling upwards to the verge of the rock. Yet this human note is lost in the immensity of the scene, which displays no other sign of the presence of man. Lonely lakes lie lapped in the hollows of these mountains and upon the floor of the plain. A deep crack in the solid earth features the distance from west to south, and is drawn towards you almost at right angles through the plain. It is formed by the sinuous clefts of the Kur and the Toporovan, and it is almost the limit of the level ground upon the west and north.

Beyond this cañon of the Kur, which is distant some twenty miles, ridge upon ridge of lofty and barren mountains are massed upon the horizon from south-west. They belong to the Dochus-Punar volcanic system, and they overpower all the ranges about us, with the exception of the dim Caucasian chain. From those slopes, as from these slopes upon which we are standing, lavas have streamed over the surface of the intermediate country and levelled the inequalities of the ground. That eruptive action is long extinct; the fires are dormant; no wreath of smoke crowns the familiar volcanic forms. The system is seen to sink to the cañon upon the north, where a gap in the outlines gives a passage to the Kur. On the northern side the heights are resumed by a long, serrated ridge, which belongs to the northern border mountains, and which extends from west by south to east by

north. A little west of north lies Lake Tabizkhuro, with the dome of Samsar rising from its shores. The foreground towards the north is filled with mountain masses, with vaulted summits and rounded slopes. Our guide was unable to name them to us, and I therefore busied myself with an outline sketch. A long ridge sweeps away from Abul on the north-eastern side in a hemicycle concave to the west. It mingles with the forms of the nearer masses, of which the most prominent may, I suppose, be identified with Kör Ogly and Godorebi, members of the Abul-Samsar eruptive group. The long bulwark of the Trialethian chain is either hidden by these nearer mountains, or only disclosed through brief vistas to a sea of outlines beyond. The northern horizon is closed by the snowy peaks of Caucasus, over a hundred miles away.

Towards the east we were not impressed by any commanding features in the mountain landscape, although we were overlooking the eastern wing of the meridional eruptive system, flanked by the Somkethian ridges on the further side. Between us and those vague shapes was lapped an extensive lake, Lake Toporovan, broken by the outline of the eastern fang of Abul. But what are those gleaming snows, just protruding above the horizon from a snowless vaulted ridge in the south-east? The flat horizontal outline is broken towards the centre by a low serration of snow-clad peaks. It is Alagoz, seventy miles distant in a straight line; it is even said that from here the dome of Ararat is visible, when it is not concealed by its faithful wreath of cloud. Compared to these, the nearer heights in the south are thrown into insignificance; the eye completes the circle to the point from which it started, the lofty ridges in the south-west.

Slowly we made our way over the piled-up boulders, down the back of the long ridge which descends to the westward, along the northern side of the deep trough. Before us, on the plain, we followed the fissure in the even surface which marks the course of the hidden river of Akhalkalaki, until it was lost in the radiance of the setting sun. Regaining our horses, we paused for awhile on the margin of a little marsh which is situated about at the foot of the mountain, some 4000 feet below the topmost peak. The mournful chorus of frogs broke the intense silence, and contributed to the impression of the loneliness of Nature which inspired the mood of our homeward ride.

CHAPTER VII

GORELOVKA AND QUEEN LUKERIA

DISCUSSING the projects of our future travel, I was reminded by Colonel Tarasoff that we must not fail to make a stay in one of the villages of Russian peasants which were situated upon the route of our journey south. The Governor had so often sung the praises of these villagers that we were all anxious to comply with his advice. If only this fertile country could be inhabited by such a peasantry; what crops it would bear, what riches it would produce! He added: "Be sure to visit Gorelovka; there you will see what Russian colonists can bring to pass."

Russian colonists! But, of course, Russia is not yet in a position to colonise, however much these distant provinces of her Asiatic empire may be in need of new methods, of new blood. Indeed, the rulers of Russia early recognised the expediency of introducing into their lawless possessions beyond Caucasus a leaven of orderly and strenuous elements from the West; and in the dearth at home of such material, which might be available for the purpose, they invited or encouraged settlements from abroad. It is possible that they were shown the way by the finger of Providence; it is at least certain that, when once the favourable opportunity arose, they did not suffer it to pass them by. In the earlier years of the present century the kingdom of Würtemberg was the scene of a struggle among the Protestant community, of which the origin was no less curious than the results were strange. It had been solemnly announced by several popular pastors that the second coming of Christ was near at hand. Such was the confidence of the reverend teachers in their prophetical powers, that they had already fixed the date when the sun and moon should be darkened, the celestial bodies should reel, the ocean roar, and men expire from fright before the crowning event had

been accomplished—the Son of Man appearing with glory in the clouds. These signs and stupendous portents should be revealed to a distracted world in 1836.

Greater credence was attached by the people to these terrible predictions by reason of what was passing in their little world. Their clergy were divided on a religious question well calculated to touch to the quick the popular mind. The predominant party succeeded in effecting an alteration in the prayers and hymns of their beloved Church. Passions became inflamed which appeared to herald persecution, which rallied the faithful in defence of the old forms. Were not the days of tribulation already upon them; and in what asylum among the mountains should these Christians of a larger Judæa find the refuge which had been promised by the word of Christ? The same teachers assured them that such an asylum would not be wanting, and might be found in the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea. The fearful nature of the Divine warning, the conviction that it would be early realised, the aversion which the new-fangled forms of worship inspired in many earnest souls—all contributed to steel the old Protestant courage; to induce a large body of human beings to leave home and native land behind them, and, without superfluous forethought, to embark on the perilous journey to that distant land where they might await in peace and spiritual contentment the glorious coming of the Redeemer of the human race. Their ranks were swelled—such is the irony of our complex society—by many who were in search of change and adventure; they left Würtemberg 1500 families strong. Two-thirds of these are said to have perished before reaching Odessa, where the remnant was reinforced by a further body of their countrymen, to the number of 100 families. In the Emperor Alexander I. they found a friend who extended to them extensive privileges upon their arrival in Georgia in 1817. They were settled in several colonies in the Governments of Tiflis and Elizabetpol, which have endured to the present day. They have been tried by afflictions and internal dissensions; some have perished by wild beasts, some were carried into captivity during the course of the Persian war. Still their numbers have increased, their standards of life have been maintained, and the traveller rests with pleasure within their villages. But neither the paramount object of their migration nor the wider purpose of Alexander has been fulfilled up to the present time. The jealousy of the Russian Church-State has deprived them of much

of their potential usefulness; and mankind are still groping beneath dark clouds of error, faintly silvered with the precious promise of perfect light.[1]

The fate or fortune of these German settlements was recalled to me at Akhalkalaki not only by the mention of the Russian colonial experiment, but also through our intercourse with a forlorn individual, whose history linked him with the early history of that courageous company. What use to conceal his name, since I cannot hide his identity, since I am only dealing with the current facts of provincial life? It was the mission of Sembat Baghdasareantz to sow abroad the seeds of the Gospel, carrying his liberty and even his life in his hand. An Armenian by birth, he had pursued his studies in Europe, where he had resided among the Methodists of Frankfurt, although not a member of that persuasion himself. A Protestant, he disclaimed allegiance to any particular denomination; he belonged to the society of Evangelical preachers which had been founded some seventy years ago in Shusha, the capital of the province of Karabagh, by missionaries from Basle. Zaremba is the name of the teacher whom his successors most closely associate with the origin and early struggles of their brotherhood; his memory is joined with that of his colleague Dittrich, who shared his labours from the first. These missionaries represented a Society whose devout zeal had been directed to the Mohammedans of distant Persia; prudence dictated the choice of a base within the territory of Russia; yet the Russian Church was a formidable enemy on Russian soil. She claimed the right of baptizing and holding within her own communion all converts to the Christian faith. But an exception had been made in favour of those communities of heterodox Christians which were tolerated by the Russian State; it was permissible for a Mohammedan to become converted to their tenets and to be enrolled as a member of their sect. The Society of Basle were therefore encouraged to attempt the expedient of a protected

[1] According to Eli Smith (*Missionary Researches in Armenia*, London 1834, pp. 195 *seq.*), upon whom I have based this account, the whole number of these German colonists was in 1830 about 2000 souls. Their present number may be estimated from the published statistics of 1886. The following are the figures for the various colonies:—

Government of Tiflis: Town of Tiflis, 1117. Administrative division (*ouezde*) of Tiflis: Alexandersdorf, 384; Marienfeld, 396; Petersdorf, 195; Friedenthal, 83; Elizabeththal, 1148. *Ouezde* of Borchali: Ekaterinenfeld, 1209; Alexandershilf, 366. Other localities, 60. Total for Government of Tiflis, 4958.

Government of Elizabetpol: Helenendorf, 1457; Anenfeld, 437. Total, 1894. Grand total, 6852 souls.

colony, which should receive a special charter from the Russian Government and be invested with the character of a tolerated sect. An example of such a colony was already before them; their Scotch brethren were engaged in preaching to the mountaineers of Caucasus from an adopted home at Karass. In the pursuit of this purpose, Zaremba and Dittrich were sent to St. Petersburg in 1821. They were received by the same Alexander who had favoured the Germans, and in a spirit which partook of their own zeal. Liberal provisions were attached to the charter of their prospective colony, among which the right of baptizing converts was included. They were further authorised to establish a printing press, to found elementary schools, and to organise a seminary in which the higher learning should be dispensed. In the meanwhile they were invited to travel in Transcaucasia with the view of selecting a locality for their future home.

When the missionaries arrived in Georgia in the spring of 1823, their interest was aroused by the condition of the German colonists— their co-religionists, almost their countrymen, settled in this remote country without spiritual direction, without the elements of ecclesiastical order. Could there exist a prior claim upon their own activities than was furnished by the spectacle of this flock without shepherds, severed from the homestead and wandering where it might? Their first summer was devoted to the charge of these brethren, among whom the slow blight of purely worldly preoccupations had already sapped the vigour of early zeal. The success of their efforts appears to have awakened the Lutheran Consistory of St. Petersburg, to whom the spiritual interests of their co-religionists in Russia are entrusted by Russian law. The Consistory sent a pastor, duly commissioned; and the colonists were resigned into his hands. But the hardy Germans had not quarrelled with ecclesiastical authority in their native country in order to subject themselves to similar tyranny in their new seats; they disclaimed any connection with the Consistory, and refused to accept its nominee. The dispute was referred to Alexander, and was by him decided with his usual good sense. He consented that the Society of Basle should supply them with pastors, and he went so far as to endow their churches himself.

When the missionaries next turned their attention to the pursuit of their original purpose, they were confronted by difficulties of a different kind. To their surprise they were informed by the Governor-General of Transcaucasia that the Government

possessed no land on the Persian frontier which could be spared for the settlement they had in view. The Mission itself would be allotted a building in any town which they might select; and, although the privilege of receiving converts would not be legally attachable, the Governor himself would exert his influence to protect them in its exercise should their efforts be blessed with fruit. Shusha was their choice for the establishment of their Mission; schools were opened and a printing press set up. But in the countries west of India the conversion of Mohammedans has at all times been an arduous and ungrateful task. Our own missionaries, established in Persia, are roused to extreme enthusiasm should a stray Moslem embrace their faith. I remember travelling across Persia with one of these pampered individuals, who appeared to me to be admirably equipped for early perdition among the surroundings in which his walk in life lay. The experiment was boldly made by the missionaries of Shusha, although the conquests of Russia, a few years after their installation, provided them with an ample field for conducting their operations without crossing into Persian soil. Zaremba followed in the track of the armies of Paskevich, distributing the Scriptures, duly translated into Turkish, and arguing the eternal truth of Christianity and the errors of Islam. But his books were torn in pieces by a population among whom contempt for Christians is engendered through their mother's milk; and I do not know that the bread which he cast upon the waters has been found up to the present day. Better results might be expected from their labours among the Armenians, whose clergy they discovered sunk in the depths of ignorance, where the beginning of the twentieth century finds them still. But they had not anticipated the existence of this sphere for their activities; and in the absence of special powers it was not permissible to them to receive converts from a Christian Church. It was open to the proselyte to enter the Orthodox Church of Russia; but, if he desired to be baptized by a minister of the tolerated sects, his own clergy could claim him back. It was inevitable that, with the progress of their schools and religious teaching, such a case should soon arise. It is, no doubt, the lofty virtue and the traditional practice of the Armenian Church to respect the religious tenets of other Christian Churches, and to inculcate a large tolerance among their congregation of the doctrines held by their brothers of a varying creed. In this respect the reverend traveller, to whose

work I am indebted for this little history, might have learnt but failed to learn a valuable lesson from a clergy whose general standards he justly condemns.[1] But the attitude of these militant missionaries, no less than the success of their efforts, touched the vanity of the Armenian hierarchy to the quick. Two deacons of their persuasion had become allied to the Swiss teachers, without formally renouncing their own Church. They were accused of influencing the people against their old religious practices, and, according to a time-honoured usage, it was ordered by the katholikos that they should be bound and sent to Edgmiatsin. The missionaries appealed to the Governor-General, who, in the spirit of a Roman proconsul, inquired for what reason they were interfering in the concerns of the Armenian Church. Let the Germans remain Germans and the Armenians remain Armenians—a ruling which was modified by the Imperial Government, to whom this high functionary referred the case. It was decided, much to the dismay of the religious communities, that if a man were determined to leave the bosom of the Armenian Church, it was not permitted to the clergy to retain him by force. But this favourable disposition on the part of the central Government was in advance of Russian methods. The victory of the missionaries was not of long duration; the multitude of their enemies overbore the power of their few friends. Their printing press is long since silent; they have no successors, except a few Armenian preachers, faithful to the old traditions, of whom our friend at Akhalkalaki was one. He himself was confined by Government within the limits of this remote fortress; two years he had already passed in this manner of imprisonment; for three more years he was sentenced to remain. He earned his own subsistence as clerk and assistant in the large draper's shop. In Shusha itself, if I may trust the official statistics, the members of the Armenian Protestant community did not exceed twenty-six souls in 1886.[2] Russian policy of the present day abhors

[1] Eli Smith, speaking of the Roman Catholic missions, is not ashamed to make use of the following language :—"Unfortunately a missionary can hardly set his foot upon any spot in that field (the Mediterranean) without encountering some sentinel of the 'Mother of Harlots,' ready to challenge him and shout the alarm" (*op. cit.* p. 210). In the course of my reading I have incidentally collected parallel passages from the works of other writers belonging to the cloth, and it is with pain that I note that for foul thoughts, expressed through a foul mouth, it would be difficult to find their equal in the writings of lay authors.

[2] The Armenian Lutherans of Baku were numbered at 350 souls in 1886 (Official Statistics, etc.). According to Sembat, there are also communities at Shemakha, Erivan and its neighbourhood, Karakala, near Kars, and Tiflis.

missionary effort; it has been justly remarked by a recent clerical traveller that if a priest wishes to travel in the Russian provinces he must divest himself of his clerical character and clerical garb.[1] I myself can testify to the extreme difficulty with which the Protestant missionaries in Turkey obtain permission to cross Russian soil. Such is the jealousy of that Orthodox Church, the object of British episcopal blandishments, to whose mercies it is announced that the Archbishop of Canterbury is about to transfer his long-cherished pupils, the Chaldæan or Assyrian Christians of Kurdistan.[2]

To Sembat the Russian colonists were an object of peculiar interest, not indeed in the same capacity in which they appealed to the Governor, but by reason of the kind of religion which they professed. Here was a people who, like himself, were exiles for the sake of religion, who resembled, in their aversion to the trammels of ecclesiasticism, the congregations in whose bosom he had himself been reared. The history of the Dukhobortsy or Dukhoborians—I became familiar with the latter termination, and such is the name of the sect to which these settlers belong—composes a chapter which is neither the least remarkable nor the most creditable in the history of the Russian Church-State. Their origin would appear to be wrapt in some mystery; according to one account a discharged soldier first disseminated the teaching in the Government of Kharkov and in the year 1740.[3] Count Tolstoy adopts the view, which would appear the more probable, that it was a foreigner, a Quaker, immigrant to Russia, who spread the seeds of their belief.[4] Neither their opinions, nor the temper which was the outcome of their convictions, were calculated to promote the smoothness of their early course. In a country where Church interests permeate every act of policy, they denied the necessity, even the expediency of a Church. Among a people attached with devotion to their temples, images and eikons, they professed the uselessness of all such external aids to religious life. The crusty formulas cracked under their merciless logic; and the grim earnestness with which these *spiritual*

[1] Müller-Simonis, *Du Caucase au Golfe Persique*, Paris, 1892, p. 3.
[2] Letter of the Rev. Athelstan Riley to *Daily Chronicle* of London, August 1897.
[3] Maksimoff, *Transcaucasia*, quoted by Radde in *Petermann's Mitth.*, 1896, p. 145.
[4] See Count Tolstoy in the *Times*, October 23, 1895. I would also refer my reader to a book published since this chapter was written, entitled *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, edited by Vladimir Tchertkoff, with a chapter and letter by Leo Tolstoy, London, 1897.

combatants grappled with themselves and with society wore out the patience or aroused the apathy of the State. Already in the eighteenth century they suffered persecution; and so bitter grew the feeling against them, that in the early years of the nineteenth century the Emperor Alexander I. settled them in the Tauric province, in the neighbourhood of the Sea of Azov. But Alexander was not the man to become the instrument of their enemies, whose hostile instances provoked an Imperial rebuke. It had been proposed that a further migration of the sect should be required; the ukase of 1816 enacted that no such migration should take place. The same edict recited the favourable testimony to their character which had been received from the official in whose district they lived, dwelt on the proved futility of the measures previously taken against them, and proclaimed that, far from meditating the repetition of any such measures, it was the Imperial will that every unnecessary restriction should be removed and that all annoyance of the sectaries should cease. The humane, the wise policy of this enlightened ruler has not been followed by his successors on the throne. Nicholas the First expelled them to the Transcaucasian provinces, and they are being persecuted at the present day. The principal emigrations took place between 1841 and 1845. They were allotted seats in the bleak country on the south of Akhalkalaki, whence they have spread into the Government of Elizabetpol and into the more recently acquired province of Kars. According to the census of 1886 their numbers in their adopted country amounted to 12,500 souls at that date.[1]

In the eyes of a philosopher the Dukhobortsy may appear to practise pure religion, and to observe the spirit of the teaching of Christ. Yet in the view of the majority of Christians their doctrines would be deemed heretical and their religious usages would be condemned. Such an attitude is the fruitful parent of misrepresentation and calumny; and the account of them which we received from our itinerant preacher was not untinctured by these defects. In justice to him one must remember that his own services would be repudiated by these fellow-offenders with him against the majesty of the Orthodox Church; that neither a Zaremba nor an Eli Smith would be welcomed by these simple

[1] Tolstoy (the *Times*, loc. cit.) puts their present number at 20,000, I know not upon what authority. The official figures based on the lists of 1886 are:—Government of Tiflis (Akhalkalaki and Borchali), 7263; Government of Elizabetpol, 2404; Government of Kars, 2766; Government of Erivan, 15. Total, 12,448.

peasants and solicited to direct and elevate their spiritual life. The imagination of the Oriental may have been coloured by the prejudice of the Christian teacher; yet I cannot doubt that the tales which he told us about them were widely current in the gossip of the countryside. According to Sembat, considerable mystery surrounded the religion of these peasants, which he himself had not sufficient knowledge to dispel. Pagan practices were freely imputed to them; and they were said to worship images of birds and beasts. Whether they worshipped them, or only regarded them as symbols, it was at least certain that they were in the habit of making such images, and we could judge for ourselves what purpose they served. And then he related to us a portion of the story of Lukeria—half-goddess and half-queen.

September 5.—In the East mankind is usually a monotonous animal, which you would scarcely notice, such is the majesty of his natural surroundings, were it not for the needs which you share in common with him, and which he most indifferently supplies. It was therefore with expectations of no ordinary character that we set out from Akhalkalaki to visit the Russian colonies on the southern margin of the great plain. The direct distance between the town and Gorelovka, the principal settlement, is seventeen miles. The road, although it constitutes the avenue of communication with Alexandropol, is little better than a track. In places the carriage is jolted in a merciless manner by protruding boulders, embedded in the soil. We started at half-past two, on a course a little east of south; the vastness of the expanse and the billowing surface of the naked soil suggested the appearance of the sea. But the horizon was outlined by the forms of lofty ranges, encircling the floor of the plain. Banks of white and grey cloud were suspended about their summits, while the zenith was blue and the air crisp, yet full of sun.

At three o'clock we gained the margin of the Toporovan river, a flash of water slowly flowing over the surface of the plain. On the further bank a small Armenian village; a little Tartar settlement on this shore. We paused awhile, that we might realise the features of the landscape, the same we had commanded from the summit of Abul. On our left hand we were skirting some stony hummocks, which flank the mass of Abul. That broad-based mountain rose beyond them, closing the landscape in the east. On our point of course, some eight miles distant, a range of gentle vaulting stretched from east by south to west by

north. It may be identified with the outer framework of the mountains which encircle Lake Chaldir. In the south-west we discerned a break in the ranges, the distant passage of the Kur. On our right the level plain; and beyond it, at a long interval, the lofty ridges which border the Kur on the left bank. Behind us, from a second cleft or opening in the mountains, a long serrated ridge, which belongs to the northern border ranges, and which formed a striking feature in the prospect from Abul. This chain and that in the west appeared to be the highest, except for the nearer outline of Abul.

In another half-hour we had passed the track which leads to Manzara, and were crossing the richest portion of the plain. The deepness of the furrows in the black earth argued careful cultivation; the crops had already been gathered in. We were now pursuing a rather more easterly direction, and could see a gap in the outlines on our point of course. The hummocks still followed us, at an interval of a couple of miles, and, beyond them, the meridional range to which Abul belongs. But, on our right hand, we now lost the open prospects; low, rocky hills advanced from the region of Lake Chaldir. It seemed a neck of the plain; for, further south, the view again opens, and the plain expands anew, in the form of a gulf-like extension, towards the water-parting between the Araxes and the Kur. It was evident that we were reaching considerably higher levels, for the crops were still standing, although ripe. The reapers were busy, gaily clad Armenians, the women helping in the work. In the distance, at the base of the eastern mountains, we saw a village, which was inhabited by Armenian Catholics. The cereals consisted of oats, from which they make bread, and a species of bearded wheat. At half-past four we arrived at the first considerable village, which, indeed, proved to consist of two villages, both of which adjoin the road. The first is called Khojabek, and is inhabited by Armenians; it contains fifty houses, and possesses a church but no school. The second, Bogdanovka, is a Russian settlement with eighty houses, the first of those settlements which we were so anxious to see.[1] At this double village we crossed a stream which was said to issue from Lake Chonchal, and which bears the same name as the lake.

Bogdanovka is not a favourable specimen of its species. I did not notice any appreciable contrast between the Russian and

[1] According to the statistics of 1886 it would contain 93 houses and 839 inhabitants.

and they have lavished all their skill in wood-carving upon the residence of their queen.

The inhabitants are tall and powerfully built, and, although they are bronzed in complexion almost beyond recognition, the fair hair bears witness to their northern origin. Their limbs are loosely put together, so that, apart from the difference of their dress and demeanour, they present a strong contrast to the neatly-made natives of the country, by reason of their lofty stature and the unbuckled slouch of their walk. The features are irregular, the eyes small, and the countenance is wanting in animation, in the case of both women and men. The dress of the men consists of dark blue trousers and jacket and a peaked military cap; this costume gives them the appearance of old soldiers, and all seem to shave the beard. The women wear very clean cotton dresses of showy patterns and bright hues.

Next morning, according to arrangement, we were to visit, in company with our host, Alexei Zupkoff, the venerable *starshina*, or head of the village, the residence and garden of the queen. The brother of the queen joined our party—Michael Vasilievich Ghubanoff, the same of whom Count Tolstoy speaks. We passed down the long, straight street of the village, the spacious intervals between the white houses opening to the breezy downs. Entering an enclosure, we found ourselves in a delightful flower-garden, among trees and thick rose-bushes, allowed to spread in freedom, and only saved from rankness and riot by the loving hand of man. How strange, after our wanderings among peoples whose material standards hover on the extreme margin where life is just possible and no more, appeared to us the sight of these garden flowers and the scent of the double rose. A low one-storeyed building faces the garden on two sides; the one wing contains the chapel and reception room, the other the private apartments in which the queen used to live. Passing within the doorway, we stood in a little hall from which rooms opened, one on either side. Both apartments are spacious, and their size was enhanced by the complete absence of furniture. Large stone stoves are built into the rooms, and form the most prominent feature in them; these stoves are usual in all the houses, but in this house they are decorated with a scroll of stone carving, which is not the case elsewhere. The ceilings are low, and the walls are so thick that the windows have the appearance of fortress embrasures, with their deep cavernous sills. The two large rooms on either side



Fig. 21. Summer Pavilion at Gorlovka.

of the hall were formerly devoted, the one to prayer meetings and the other to social gatherings; but it was evident that they were not in use at the time of my visit, and I was told that assemblies in this house had been interdicted by Government, on account of the fresh outbreak of fanaticism which was apprehended should the people come together beneath the roof of their former queen.

The general arrangement and appearance of the chapel or apartment in which they used to meet for prayer is this—the low ceiling is composed of narrow pine planks, the surface being relieved by delicate wood beadings along the seams where plank meets plank. The large pier of the stove projects boldly into it from the side of the door. The walls of such rooms are in general covered with a neat paper of common Russian pattern, and the floors are either painted a reddish colour, or the boards are left natural, and stopped, and scrubbed daily, like the deck of a yacht. Round this particular apartment there runs a low bench; this is the only sitting-place. Large pots of flowers, carefully pruned and tended, bloomed in the deep embrasures of the windows, and broke the light, diffused about the sober apartment in a warm and regular glow. In that part of the building where the queen used to live, the rooms, although smaller, presented a similar appearance; they were maintained in the same state of scrupulous cleanliness as though she inhabited them still. The furniture had all been removed from them; but, in addition to the pots of beautiful flowers, there was in each a dish of Easter eggs.

In the centre of the garden among the rose-bushes stands the summer pavilion of the queen (Fig. 21). The kernel of the structure may be described as consisting of two square boxes, placed one above the other, and serving as living rooms. Each side of the upper room is broken by a large window; so that the view from within embraces the whole settlement and all the landscape around. The lower room contains a bed and a row of pegs, on which, behind a light covering, hang the dresses of the queen; that above is bare of all furniture, and was always used as a sitting-room. A broad wooden balcony with staircase runs round this inner kernel, supported on pillars of wood. They have lavished all their skill upon the decoration of this balcony, enriching it with delicate fretwork traceries and with figures placed at the angles of the roof. At each corner sits a dove with wings

outspread, while on the summit of the roof a dove is just alighting, the wings just closing, the legs outstretched. In front of the pavilion, on the side of the house, there is a large standard lantern, a work of curious design and fancy, surmounted by an image of St. George and the dragon, carved with much life and vigour in wood.

By my side stood the man who had made these images, and I asked him whether they had any religious meaning, peculiar to their creed. I was loath to put the question, so obvious was their purpose, so universal the symbolism they implied. He answered good-humouredly that they were pure ornaments, and that he was flattered by my appreciation of his skill.

In a room, removed from the part of the village in which the queen lived, they showed us her furniture and effects, her personal ornaments, and every detail of her attire. Everything that belonged to her had been carefully kept and cherished, like the relics of a saint. Her possessions had been those of a simple peasant woman, verging on the middle class—a velvet chair or two, some statuettes in plaster, a few chromo-lithographs. Many trays of coloured Easter eggs were here collected—the offerings, I suppose, of many happy Easters, when she had led their congregations of prayer.

Seven years had elapsed, at the time of our visit, since they had lost their beloved Lukeria Vasilievna, their leader both in spiritual and in temporal matters; they honoured and obeyed her like a queen.[1] Her influence was supreme among the settlers on these highlands; and it appears to have extended to all the colonists in Transcaucasia of the Dukhobortsy sect. The traveller Radde, who visited Gorelovka in 1875, was privileged to meet her in her home. He describes her as a widow in the thirties, strong, tall, of full but still shapely forms. Her features wore the imprint of beauty. He testifies to the veneration in which she was held. That Lukeria was nothing more to them than the contemporary holder of an office which had been the outcome of their religious and social needs, would, I think, be no less fallacious to suppose than to credit the rumours current in the country that it had been in the character of a divine personage that her people had submitted themselves to her will. A childlike nature, at once the product of the religious temperament and its peculiar pride, may find it difficult

[1] *Lukeria Vasilievna Kalmakoff* was given to me as her full name.

to discriminate between the emotions of worship and of love. When I questioned them, they strongly disclaimed for Lukeria any pretension to supernatural gifts, and they rejected as a fable the imputation that they had paid her divine honours. They had loved and revered in her a good and noble woman, who raised their lives, relieved their sorrows, and led their aspirations towards the higher life. The evidence of her work and example is written in the appearance of this model village, and in the demeanour of its inhabitants. All were well clothed and clean and well nourished; it was a pleasure to see them go about their business in their quiet, earnest way. I saw no poor people in Gorelovka, not a sign of the habitual squalor of the East. Provision had been made for the orphans and the destitute, and I understood that all the colonists of the neighbourhood contribute to the funds. But what impressed me most, beside the evidence of their affection in these dwellings and this enclosure maintained in neatest order, as though in spirit she inhabited them still, was the love of flowers which the queen appears to have developed in her people and brought them to share with her. In the decline of wealth and of the arts, the sight of garden flowers becomes more and more rare in the East; and, at best, they are there little more than the ornament of luxury and the setting of sensual delights. At Gorelovka one cannot doubt that these geraniums and roses are cultivated for their own sake alone.

The religion of the Dukhobortsy resembles that of our own extreme Protestants; it is the Government fans their zeal into destroying flames. That they are Christians there can, I think, be scarcely any doubt; they told me positively that they acknowledged and worshipped Christ as God.[1] But God is a spirit, and they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The spirit of God dwells in the souls of His servants, who themselves are sons of God. How therefore can a church, an image or an eikon claim reverence as a holy thing? In these there dwells no spirit, no effluence of Godhood; the Church of God is the human soul. Reasoning thus, the Dukhobortsy bow to one another after prayer, saluting the divinity that resides in man. Scripture they

[1] Count Tolstoy's informant says: "To Christ, as to an historical personage, the Dukhobortsy do not ascribe much importance" (*The Times*, loc. cit.). He goes on to tell how, when the Quakers visited them in 1818 and heard their opinion about Jesus Christ (that he was a man), these pious people exclaimed, "Darkness!" I cannot reconcile this account with what I learnt at Gorelovka, except by the reflection that the Christian world itself holds many opinions upon this subject.

accept; but the book of God must be a living book, a book to which there is never any end. Hence their religious conceptions float about in the mouths of the people, in the form of psalms. New psalms may be sung; but the old psalms never perish—the Word of God, old yet ever new. They reject priests and all the apparatus of official religion, and themselves conduct whatever simple ceremonies may be necessary upon birth, at marriage and after death.

The moral ideas of the Dukhobortsy are such as might be expected from a people who hold this lofty view of the nature of man. Man, being the receptacle of the divinity, must not injure, must not kill his fellow-man. Hence they do not see the necessity of judicial tribunals; for they do not wish to wrong any man. Nor do they consider that one man should exercise authority over another; each one must do his duty, because it is his duty, and no compulsion can be necessary from outside.

That from such peaceful surroundings there should issue fierce dissensions, that a people trained to mutual love and forbearance should be inflamed by the worst passions of an opposite nature, and turn the hand which they had been unwilling to lift against their fellow-men upon the brothers of their own creed, is a melancholy example of the failure of purely emotional methods to elevate permanently the nature of man. It seems there are no short cuts to virtue; the standards attained under the impulse of religious enthusiasm have but an ephemeral life. With the death of Lukeria was removed the personality and visible example for which simple natures crave; and the exaggeration of sentiment, of which she had been the object, brought with it its own revenge. Although cut off at the early age of forty-three years, the queen was already a widow when she died. Her marriage had been childless, and, even had she possessed a natural successor, the place which she occupied in the imagination of her people would perhaps have been impossible to fill. Yet scarcely a year had elapsed from the time of her death when a pretended successor arose—a boy, who, I believe, claimed relationship with her, and who presumed to be worthy to wear the mantle which had hitherto descended on none. The inhabitants of Gorelovka, whose version of the story I am giving, were emphatic in their statement that this youth was an impostor. "He told lies," was the expression which they used. His authority had never been acknowledged by them, and he had stirred up their own brethren against

them. I gathered that they had not stopped short of actual violence in the ardour of religious and partisan zeal. Gorelovka, it appears, had been solid against the usurper; but opinions had been divided in the neighbouring villages and throughout the community settled in Transcaucasia of the Dukhobortsy sect. The Russian Government, as was natural, surveyed the situation from the standpoint of hard-headed prudence; they were not anxious to see installed a successor to Lukeria and a revival of the old religious flame. The weight of their authority was thrown in the scale against the pretender; he was suppressed without delay and banished from the country to a remote exile in the north.

At the time of our visit the feud was slumbering; Count Tolstoy informs us how it broke out anew. It would appear that the pretender—his name was Peter Veriguin—was supported by the large majority of the Dukhobortsy, who were incensed at the action of the authorities in making over to the brother of Lukeria, our friend Ghubanoff, the succession to the communal funds. From his place of exile Veriguin corresponded with his disaffected brethren; Government, apprised of the fact, removed him to Siberia during the winter of 1894-5. While he was in Moscow on his way to the land of forgetfulness, he was visited by his relations and by some of his spiritual allies. Them he charged to convey a proposal to the brethren: that they should abstain from participation in the violent acts of Government, should refuse to serve in the capacity of soldiers, and should destroy all their arms. This proposal was accepted by the whole of the larger party; and they prepared to translate it into action without delay.

In the Government of Elizabetpol, on the first day of the festival of Easter, eleven Dukhobortsy, who were performing military service with a reserve battalion, refused to parade, and formally signified that they intended to serve no more. At their head was an individual who, in spite of his legal disability as a sectarian, had been promoted to the rank of a non-commissioned officer for his high qualities and the exceptional nature of his deserts. Their example was followed in other provinces, in Akhalkalaki, in Kars. No pains were spared by the authorities to save them from their rashness; when persuasion failed, fear was tried. Five recalcitrants in Akhalkalaki were taken into the prison yard and placed in line. A firing party of Cossacks was

called in and ordered to load with ball; the prisoners asked and received permission to pray. The command "make ready" was next issued, and a few minutes passed. The former soldiers quietly awaited the word to fire. It was not given; the muzzles were lowered, and they were conducted to their cells. In other places Cossacks charged the prisoners and made pretence to cut them down. When the sectarians still persisted in their decision, they were beaten with the lash. Asked how they justified their action, they answered that they were Christians, endeavouring to observe the precepts of Christ. Nor was their refusal to serve in the army the only issue with Government into which they were carried by their aversion to violence in human affairs. It so happened that a certain prisoner, in course of transportation, was brought to one of their villages. It was the duty of the elder of the village to provide for his further escort and to hand him over to a sure man. This charge had fallen by turn upon the brother of the sergeant who had renounced service on the first day of Easter. The man informed the elder that he could not escort the prisoner because he would be unable to use force. He asked him to report his refusal to the authorities; but the elder answered that he was not prepared to turn traitor; he should bring the prisoner to the house of his temporary warder, who would act as he thought best. The man returned to his house; the elder brought the prisoner, and went away. The warder treated his charge as though he were a pilgrim, warmed him, gave him to eat and drink, gave him a bed. Next morning, observing that the prisoner was a poor man, he supplied him with money and offered to direct him on his way. When they had arrived outside the village, he showed him two roads, of which he gave him the choice. He told him that the one led to his destination as prisoner and the other to liberty. The prisoner preferred the first road, and came to the place of his destination. In this case no evil consequences ensued.

In 1895 the prison of Elizabetpol contained no less than 120 members of the Dukhobortsy sect. All had been sentenced for offences of the nature already described; but the crown of the people's offence was not yet come. In a country where the holding of arms is regarded in the light of a civil duty, they determined to burn every weapon in their possession of which the purpose was to kill men. The night of the 28th of June, the eve of the feast of Peter and Paul, was chosen for the simultaneous

execution of this resolve. In Kars and in Elizabetpol the event passed off without serious trouble; but the case was different in the province of Akhalkalaki. About three versts from the village of Orlovka there is an excavation in the rock, which the people call "The Cave." In this spot it was their habit to hold their large prayer meetings; it was now chosen as the tryst for the burning of arms. On the appointed night about 2000 people were there collected; a pile was made, fuel and petroleum added, and the whole ignited in due course. In the morning, when the flames were exhausted, the assembly offered up prayer, and each man returned to his home. The day passed quietly; they returned in the evening, and collected together the metal parts which had escaped the fire. These they melted into a mass, in the presence of a still larger concourse, among whom were many women and young children.

In Gorelovka, which was on the side of Government, the restless symptoms among the opposite party, and the fact that they were collecting arms, had not passed unobserved. Anticipating attack, the villagers had denounced their co-religionists and had received a garrison of Cossacks and regular troops. On the 30th of June an order came to all the settlements that the Governor was about to arrive in Bogdanovka from Gorelovka and that he required all the settlers to repair to that place. Those who were at home obeyed the summons; their absent kinsmen, although apprised of the order, remained where they were and engaged in prayer. A messenger arrived and repeated the injunction. The old men answered that they were praying, that their prayers would continue, and that, if the Governor wished to see them, it was his part to come to them, they being many and he one. A second messenger was sent with no better fortune. Then the watchers ran in with the news that the Cossacks were close at hand. No sooner had the assemblage closed together than the horsemen were upon them. An officer rode at their head and cried "Oura!" The crowd was ridden down and mercilessly beaten with the sharp lashes which the Cossacks use. A man was seen to brandish his whip in the air for shame of striking. The officer approached him, shouted to him that he was deceiving the Tsar, and struck him in the face with his lash. Bruised and covered with blood, the people were taken to the Governor; the women followed, although the Cossacks tried to whip them away. Approaching Bogdanovka, they met the

carriage of the high official, and the officer shouted "Hats off!" The old men answered him that they would know how to do their duty when the Governor passed and saluted them. Again "Whips, Oura!" and a second pitiless beating, until the grass was red with blood. The Governor stopped the whipping and proceeded to Bogdanovka, where he collected the brethren who had remained behind. When he began to upbraid them, a man stepped forward with a military certificate in his hand. This document he handed in to the Governor, announcing that in future he refused to serve. The Governor lost command of his temper and beat him with a stick. Then the people declared that they would no longer obey Government or comply with any of its demands. The Governor retaliated by ordering them to be whipped, and even threatened to shoot them down. The next measure was to quarter Cossacks in their villages, who lived at free quarters and violated the women. Four hundred and sixty-four families were expelled from the district and sent to starve in Georgian villages. These became labourers to the Georgians and continued to maintain their high character.[1]

Reflecting upon this story after reading these accounts, the mind travels back to the dawn of Christianity and to the annals of the early Church. The famous letter of Pliny appears fresh and modern, while the grave language of the London *Times* in the leading article which it publishes mingles naturally with the spirit of a pre-Christian age: "The first principles of their creed lead straight to social anarchy, tempered only by the whims of the 'sons of God.' They are doubtless sincere fanatics, and as such must be looked upon with a measure of pity and respect." It is interesting to place by the side of this paragraph in a modern newspaper the words of the great historian of the Roman world: "The Christians were not less averse to the business than to the pleasures of this world. The defence of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine which enjoined an unlimited forgiveness of past injuries and commanded them to invite the repetition of fresh insults. Their simplicity

[1] As a sequel to these events, the Dukhobortsy have emigrated in large numbers from their seats beyond Caucasus. Once the flower of the peasantry in Russia, and afterwards the special pride of Russian Governors in their seats of exile, they have now lost their hardiest spirits in a fresh exodus. And it is the British Empire which receives them! Their choice was at first bestowed upon the island of Cyprus; but the warm climate was unpropitious, and they lost some 100 souls in about eight months. The bulk of the emigrants appear to have taken ship from Cyprus for Canada and British North America during the spring of 1899.

was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life; nor could their humane ignorance be convinced that it was lawful on any occasion to shed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice or by that of war, even though their criminal or hostile attempts should threaten the peace and safety of the whole community; . . . while they inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil administration or the military defence of the empire. . . . This indolent, or even criminal disregard to the public welfare exposed them to the contempt and reproaches of the pagans, who very frequently asked, What must be the fate of the empire, attacked on every side by the barbarians, if all mankind should adopt the pusillanimous sentiments of the new sect?"

Have the Christians of the present day become pagans, or did the pagans only change their name?

CHAPTER VIII

TO ALEXANDROPOL

TO-NIGHT we are to sleep on the banks of the Arpa, by the waters which swell the flood of the Araxes and sweep the base of Ararat! This was the reflection which lightened the mood of sorrowful meditation that our visit to Gorelovka had inspired. Our grave hosts, for whom one felt a vivid sympathy, a warm affection, conducted us in their spacious waggons to the posting station of Efremovka, a few versts' distance along our road. It is a Russian settlement with some ninety houses and a population of 860 souls, besides a collection of huge and formidable dogs. The station is a stage of 16 versts (10½ miles) from Bogdanovka, and of 21 versts (14 miles) from the succeeding post house of Shishtapa, which was our destination for the afternoon. At Efremovka we took leave of our companions, and, at the same time, of the solid villages of this Russian zone.

A country of elevated uplands, a natural carpet of springy turf, broken here and there by patches of cultivation which struggle upwards from the plainer levels to the hillsides. Grey lights descending from a grey heaven upon a surface swelling and falling like the sea. In the east the near reliefs of the mountains of the meridional border, their base checkered with plots of fallow and stubble, their summits veiled with cloud. At their foot the lake and marsh of Madatapa, with the Russian village of Troitskoy upon its shore. In the west the vague downs, rising to a distant horizon of loftier shapes, similar to themselves. Such were the opening phases of the scene through which we passed to the scarcely perceptible water-parting between the Araxes and the Kur. After less than an hour's drive from Efremovka we could see the village of Korakhbur (Armenian Catholic) on the hillside, about a mile away on our left hand; on

our right was an Armenian hamlet, which was named to us Jaila; both are situated in the southern watershed. The height of the parting between the basins, at the point where we crossed it, is placed by the Russian map at 6777 feet, a figure which, if it errs, is below the truth. And now for the first time were disclosed the gleaming peaks which we had seen from Abul—beyond a line of hummock hills the group of snowy teeth which break the horizontal outline of Alagöz.

Tazaken, a Turkish settlement; Khancharli, a large village of Armenian Catholics, were rapidly left behind. The landscape opened to a lofty range of swelling shapes and rounded outlines on the western margin of the plain. They were the mountains about Lake Chaldir; the declining sun was about to touch them from behind a shroud of mist. Sheets of light were thrown upon those distant opaline masses as upon the coast of a hazy sea.

At a quarter to six—we had left Efremovka at 4.20—we were winding between the two Shishtapas, on our right the Turkish Shishtapa, washed by the young stream of the Arpa; the Armenian Shishtapa further away on our left. At six o'clock we crossed a bridge which spans a tributary of the Arpa, coming from the east. The confluence takes place some hundred yards below the bridge, and the name of the tributary was given to us as Kizil-Goch (the red lamb). It is a solid stone bridge with a curious stone ornament; on the further side you rise to an eminence which overlooks the Arpa, and upon which the lonely post station of Shishtapa is built.

The doors were heavily barred; when at length they yielded, after many grumblings, a wizened figure in official uniform stepped forth. It was the postmaster—it seemed the embodiment of some immense and ideal sorrow of which all human griefs are but the mirrored images. How cross the threshold upon which he stood, how enlist his sympathy with our puny wants, who himself was the incarnation of Want? But the keenness of the air overcame our hesitation; a night in tents and without blankets was the alternative course. So with a greeting, which was coldly returned, we led the way to the interior, followed by our dismal host. It appeared to consist of a single room, a spacious apartment with bare floor and white-washed walls. A few chairs and a large table were the only furniture; the only ornaments the usual coloured oleograph of the reigning emperor, and, perhaps, the almanac and the posting map, which

were suspended on the walls. Yet the postmaster was not the only occupant of the building; children appeared, and with them a young and beautiful girl. A Polish maiden? one could not doubt of the answer, as one admired the slender form, the swelling bust, the full lips and the pale face with its animated eyes. Ah! the pitiful story eloquently told by this unambiguous presence—the mother already a victim to the prolonged atrophy of these cheerless surroundings, the father, a sapless tree in an alien soil. Who sent them to such cold solitudes, these warm natures and passionate temperaments? Find a wilderness and it will be tenanted by a Pole. . . . The practical question arose: how accommodate ourselves and the family within the four white walls? The father protested that it was completely impossible; the girl came to our assistance, and revealed the existence of an adjoining closet, which she offered to share with the children for the night. After partaking of a frugal meal, after several futile attempts at sustained conversation, our strange party disposed itself for the night.

For myself, I could not sleep, for all the comfort of my camp bed, and memories of sound slumbers which it evoked. Was it the grave faces of the Russian peasants and the strange irony of their history and circumstances that haunted and kept the mind strung? Or were the senses fluttering under the presence of the fair woman whose soft breathing one could almost hear? God residing in those frames of steel, God incarnate in her voluptuousness!—Yet *their* God was not the God of the pantheist, but a stern, a militant God. . . . And thought wandered out into the stony by-paths, the home of the sprites that mock thought. The ingenious wickedness of man with his Churches and his heretics, and all the cowering crowd of Jews, Armenians, Poles!

A faint light was already diffused over the cheerless apartment as I passed down the row of heavy sleepers and gained the door and the open air. Day had broken—a morning of perfect stillness, the vapours lingering on the saturated grass. A cold, grey world of bleak uplands and mist-veiled mountains, a chill atmosphere which sent one pacing to and fro. But when the sun rose above the haze into the clear vault of heaven, the colours started, the chill softened into delicious freshness, and the peculiar beauty of the scene was revealed. One looked in vain for the snowy fangs of Alagöz; they had been lost to view behind the amphitheatre of nearer outlines which composed the closing phases

of our stage of yesterday. But within the limits of those gentler shapes was outspread an ideal landscape, typical of the most elevated areas of the tableland (Fig. 22). The plainer levels were invested with the character of swelling downs, and down and hill-side were carpeted with turf. Over the green and fibrous surface flowed the Arpa and its tributary, flashes of white and luminous blue. Here and there brief patches of cultivation checkered the soil, especially towards north-west and west. In the middle distance one could discern two villages of moderate size—the two Shishtapas, barely distinguished from the waste. Beyond the Turkish Shishtapa, obscuring all but the first line of the settle-



FIG. 22. HEAD WATERS OF THE ARPA CHAI.

ment, lay a captive cloud, an opaque opaline mass. The illustration shows the rivers descending towards you and uniting at your feet. The hills which line the distance circle round and mass behind you, closing the prospect towards the south. In that direction the united waters bid farewell to the grassy uplands, and enter the stony tracts which slope to the plain of Alexandropol between the outworks of the Chaldir system and those of the meridional border range.

September 7.—By half-past eight we were following the course of the Arpa and taking leave of the green meadows and blue streams. We were soon involved among the hummock ridges which confine the amphitheatre of the Shishtapas, and through which the river winds in a stony valley, at some little distance to the west of the

track. Progress was retarded by the steepness of the inclines as we crossed this elevated ground. Once again in possession of a prospect, we were skirting the bases of successive promontories, which projected, on our left hand, from the mountains of the meridional border into the broken surface of a volcanic plateau. This plateau extends for many miles to the westward, and is bounded by lofty mountains on that side. The Arpa was running off into the easier levels in the west, while the road hugged the rocky eastern shore. The waters of the river were not visible after leaving Shishtapa; they are buried in a cañon, of which you trace the sinuous edges through the bleak and boulder-strewn waste. Ala-Kilisa, a village of Armenian-speaking Greeks; Amasia, a Turkish settlement; Karachanta and Kara Mehemet, the first inhabited by Turks, the second by Armenians, were successively left behind. At half-past ten we arrived at the station of Jellap, a stage of twenty versts (thirteen miles).

The post house is situated at some little distance from the village—an Armenian settlement which is exposed to view after you have left the station, high-seated among the rocks above the road. It is a gloomy habitation, standing in a stony valley by the banks of a stream which descends to the trough of the Arpa from the rocky hummocks to which the road adheres. Starting at a few minutes after eleven, we commenced by crossing a projecting promontory, mounting the slopes of the puny ridges by steep gradients, and never regaining the prospect which had been lost before reaching Jellap. At length, at half-past eleven, the valleys opened; and we overlooked the landscape of the plain of Alexandropol.

A vast plain lay before us, level as water, to the floor of which the ground declines on every side. A single mountain, which has the appearance of a gigantic bank of soil, is drawn in a long horizontal outline along its southern verge. This outline is the dominant feature in the scene, extending from north of east to south of west (Fig. 23). The heart and highest points of the volcanic elevation are situated in the easterly portion of the mass; they are represented by the jagged profile of the broken outer side of a crater, and they gleam with perpetual snow. Some conception of the stupendous proportions of the mountain may be derived from a rough measurement of its protraction in a latitudinal sense. On the east the volcanic emissions have been arrested by the barrier of the border ranges; on the west they have descended



Fig. 23. Alagöz from the Plain of Alexandropol.

from the central or subordinate points of eruption to the valley of the Arpa Chai. From that valley, in the neighbourhood of Ani, to the road which passes between the volcano and the meeting slopes of the border chain is a distance of over 40 miles. Throughout this space the bulk of the giant is thrown across the landscape, his head and body resting against the framework of the border ranges, his feet extended to the margin of the historic stream.

Such a prospect is the rich reward of the traveller; we paused to admire and to realise the scene. It was difficult to believe that those snowy peaks were over 30 miles distant; yet a glance at the map brought home to us this fact. The floor of the plain has an elevation of some 5000 feet, while those peaks are 13,000 feet high. Between us and the base of the mountain no meaner object disturbed the view, which ranged uninterrupted across dim tracts of earth and stone, tinted with shades of ochre in the burnt grass and scanty stubble, but treeless, without verdure of any kind. In the east the limit of the plain is the outline of the border ranges, of which we were touching the skirts; they describe a wide curve, concave towards the expanse, and appear to pass over into a meridional direction before the point of intersection with the volcanic mass. Their sides are bare of vegetation, as are those of the volcano, and they are much broken into hummock forms. From north-west descend the slopes of the Chaldir system, of which the base is inclined towards the plain. In the west the eye is unable to discern a boundary to the misty distance of flat or undulating ground. A little to the right of the white summits in the south your attention is directed to a slender line of grey—a low relief upon the surface of the plain. It is Alexandropol; such is the first view of the site of the city, backed by Alagöz. We made rapid progress across the level interval and arrived in the town at a quarter before one.

CHAPTER IX

AT ALEXANDROPOL

THE city and district of Alexandropol are included in the administrative division of the Government of Erivan. Yet they are separated from the capital and territory of that name by a natural barrier of vast extent. The mass of Alagöz, which one may compare to a gigantic shield with a central boss, interrupts communication with the valley of the Araxes. It must be turned and cannot be crossed. In a geographical sense the province of Alexandropol unites more naturally with that of Kars; while, if we measure its importance by the populousness of its principal town, it deserves to enjoy a position of primacy in the Government of which it may form part. The city has double the number of inhabitants as compared to Erivan, if I can trust the figure given me by the governor and corroborated by the leading notables—a round total of 30,000 souls.[1]

Its extreme youth and the fact that it is almost exclusively peopled by Armenians are the most remarkable features about Alexandropol. At the commencement of the nineteenth century the site was partly vacant and partly tenanted by an insignificant village called Gümri. The district formed part of the outlying province of Shuragel,[2] which belonged to the Georgian kingdom at the time of the annexation of Georgia by Russia in 1801. The Cossacks who came to take over this important piece of territory appear to have established a camp in the vicinity of Gümri; the place was early developed into a frontier station on the side of Turkey, and in 1817, when it was visited by an

[1] The official statistics, based on the census of 1886, give Alexandropol a population of 24,230 souls, of whom 22,920 are Armenians. Only 200 of these are Armenian Catholic.

[2] Ritter (*Erdkunde*, vol. x. pp. 438-39) identifies the modern name Shuragel with the country designated in Armenian literature as Shirak.

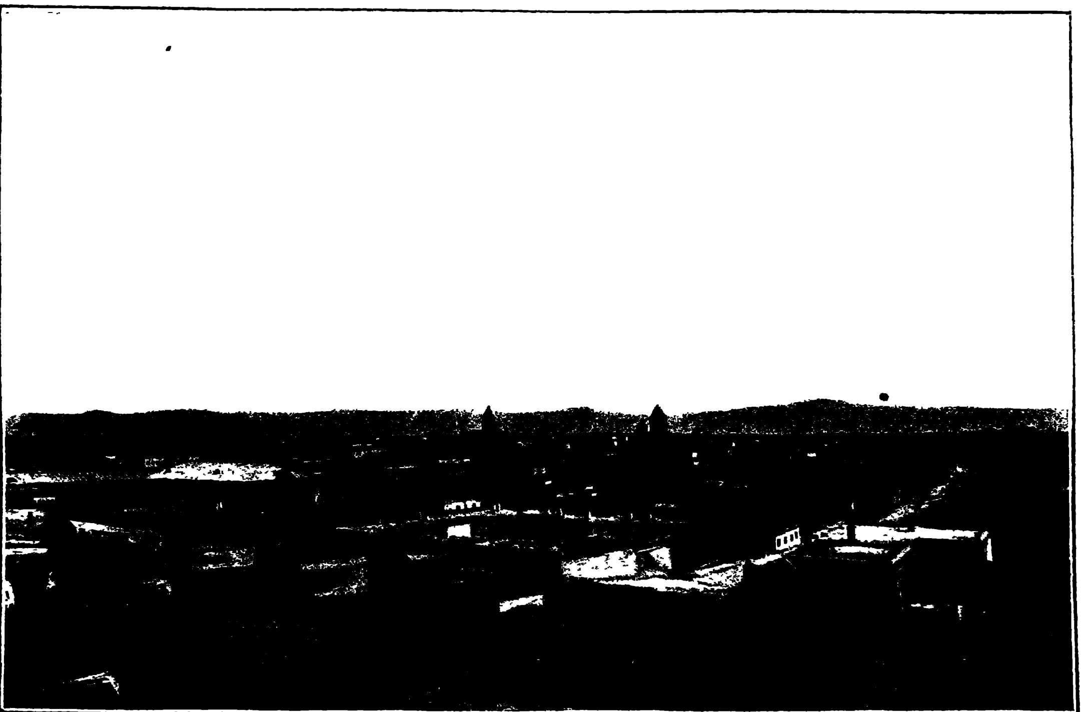


Fig. 24. Alexandropol from the Armenian Cemetery.

English traveller, was already occupied by a considerable Russian garrison.[1] In the war between Russia and Turkey, which broke out in the spring of 1828, this partially fortified position served the Russians as an advanced base. It was on the line of advance or defence on the side of Gümri that the Russian military authorities placed the greatest store. There the Russian possessions were most open to attack; but, on the other hand, it was through Gümri that they could take the offensive with the greatest advantage, since it enabled them to cut off Akhaltsykh and the northern provinces from Erzerum and those upon the west. How Turkey could have permitted her powerful neighbour to acquire this strip without an appeal to arms can probably best be explained on the ground of Oriental fatalism. When Marshal Paskevich had taken Erivan and concluded the war with Persia by the Peace of Turkomanchai (February 1828), his hands were free to cut large slices from the Ottoman empire; and it was at Gümri, overlooking the Arpa Chai, the boundary against Turkey, that he effected the concentration of his troops. From Gümri he set out in person at the head of his army on the 26th of June 1828. The outcome of this war was the capture of Kars and Erzerum, and the permanent acquisition by Russia of Akhàltsykh and the northern districts under the Treaty of Adrianople (1829). The restoration to the Sultan of the two first-named strongholds increased the strategical value of the station on the Arpa Chai. Gümri was slowly but persistently converted into a first-rate fortress, the necessary timber for the constructions being supplied to his hereditary enemies by the Pasha of Kars from the forests of the Soghanlu Dagh. In 1836 the place was visited by the Emperor Nicholas I. in person, who inspected the works, which, however, were only in an inchoate state.[2] The inhabitants date the prosperity of their town from the Imperial visit, which at once inaugurated an era of rapid expansion and transformed the village of Gümri into the city of Alexandropol. Since Russia has become possessed of Kars, the fortress on the Arpa has somewhat declined in importance; but it is still occupied by a considerable garrison, and the strength of its defences should enable it to give a good account of itself in time of war.

[1] Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, etc.*, London, 1821, vol. i. p. 168.

[2] Wilbraham, *Travels in the Transcaucasian Provinces*, London, 1839, p. 277.

Our experiences at Akhaltsykh had warned me to proceed with caution in endeavouring to realise the topography of the site. It was not often or in public that I could have recourse to my compass; yet I contrived to collect sufficient particulars of an innocent nature to supply my own wants and those of my lay readers. Conceive in the first place a fordable river flowing on a southerly course through a plain of vast extent and slightly basin-like surface. On the left or eastern bank beyond a strip of quite level ground rises a ridge of insignificant elevation, roughly parallel to the stream. Of no great breadth upon the summit, it tends to circle inwards on the north of the town, which it screens from the river. South of the site it dies away into the plain. The north-west angle of this ridge is occupied by the citadel, and consists of a spacious table surface, with plenty of room for barracks and magazines. The entire formation is strongly fortified with earthworks and with massive structures in brick or stone. Such is the principal or, at least, the most conspicuous feature in the defences of Alexandropol. But it is by no means the only advantage which they derive from Nature.

Just inside and, therefore, east of this longitudinal ridge a second back of nearly equal height and of similar direction rises beyond a ravine which is threaded by a brook, and which widens as it extends from the citadel towards the south. It forms the standpoint from which I took my photograph of the town (Fig. 24), extending eastwards at its skirts. The tombs seen in the foreground belong to a straggling Armenian cemetery. From this position on the inner ridge I estimated the distance across the ravine at about five hundred yards, and our distance from the river at about three-quarters of a mile. As the valley narrows towards the citadel, it is filled with the trees of a little park, whither the citizens repair to escape the dazzling light of summer and to enjoy the contrast of deep shade and murmuring waters. It forms a welcome patch of verdure in the treeless expanse. On this same ridge, but further south, are seen the graves of officers and men who fell in the last Russo-Turkish war. They are grouped about a monument to Loris Melikoff; but I believe that great general of Armenian origin is buried at Tiflis.

In the manner I have tried to describe, Alexandropol is screened on the west at first by the river, and then by two long

ridges, with a valley between which may be compared to a gigantic moat. I am not aware that the inner crest is strengthened by fortifications; but it offers an admirable second line of defence. The curious feature about the site is that the ridging formation is not yet exhausted; three minor and roughly parallel elevations are covered with the houses of the town. They cause the streets to go up and down, and make them none too pleasant walking. As a fortress, I should be inclined to conclude that the place is weak upon the east and south; while the nature of the ground beyond the river, rising as it does from the right bank to a height almost equal to that of the outer ridge, exposes it to a bombardment from that side.

It must not be supposed that these characteristics of the topography are prominent in the landscape. They are lost in the folds of the plain and overpowered by the scale of their surroundings. Look where you will, you have around you the floor of a sea-like expanse, bounded at immense intervals by mountainous coasts. In the east it is the indented outline of the range on the side of Georgia, curving round from a south-easterly into a due meridional direction as it approaches the point of intersection with Alagöz. From that point the great volcano composes a side of the frame, inclining a little south of an east-west line. It forms a magnificent object as seen from Alexandropol, high in the sky, yet with scarcely perceptible gradient in the profile on either side of the core of precipitous peaks. You follow its train declining into the vague spaces of the west, where the bulging convexities become broken into hummock forms. The greatest breadth of the plain, as it appears to the eye, would be measured from the wall of the range which intersects with Alagöz to a distant mass of mountain in the south-west. That vague boundary probably belongs to one of the elevations on the plateau which extends between Kars and the Araxes. Between it and the skirts of the volcano there is a broad depression in the outlines, giving passage to the Arpa Chai. The misty prospects on the west and north-west did not reveal during the course of our stay the limits of the level surface in those directions.

Let us see now what these latter-day Armenians have made of their city; for the public and private edifices are creations of their own. It is evident that they have inherited the love of building which distinguished their forefathers, and that the craft of that excellent masonry which we admire in their ancient

monuments has not become extinct. On the other hand, they share to the full in the tastelessness of the modern peoples in the decorative arts. Their churches are at once pretentious and commonplace both in design and in ornamentation. Of those exquisite mouldings with their lace-work chisellings which adorn the exteriors of their mediæval counterparts there is, indeed, scarcely a trace on these ambitious structures. But even the standard of the seventeenth century, of which many a specimen has been preserved elsewhere, notably in the porches of much older churches, has not been maintained into our times. Size and a certain effect, rather than elegance of proportion and a loving care for detail, are the characteristics of the new style. The cathedral, dedicated to the Trinity, is a spacious building, which is held up to your admiration, as blending the features of the old models. It is difficult to understand how such an assertion and such a comparison can be forthcoming from people who have at their doors in the neighbouring cloister of Marmashen an example of the art of their ancestors. I need only say of the cathedral that it is built of black volcanic stone, relieved by courses of the same material but with a ruddy hue. I was informed that it was commenced in 1859 and completed in 1874.



FIG. 26. BYZANTINE PICTURE IN GREEK CHURCH.

Besides this temple the Gregorian Armenians have three churches, of which the most considerable is a large structure in grey stone, named after the Virgin Mary. The Armenian Catholics are possessed of a single but roomy church. The Greek chapel of St. George is of some interest because of its connection with the Greek colony of Erzerum, who, like so many of the ancestors of the Armenian inhabitants of Alexandropol,

followed the armies of Marshal Paskevich upon his evacuation of Turkish territory. It contains a picture of St. George and the dragon (Fig. 25) which is of considerable merit, and is said to contain the date of 1327. But those figures, as they now appear, are due to a recent restoration. The father of a M. Mergoroff, whom I met during my stay, was principally concerned in its transportation at the time of the exodus. I understand that it was brought to Gümri, whence it migrated to a village called Zalga, only returning after the lapse of seven years. M. Mergoroff writes a curious hand, partly composed of Greek letters and partly based upon the Russian alphabet. This characteristic may correspond to the present culture of his countrymen at Alexandropol, numbering some four hundred souls.

This flourishing town is badly supplied in respect of education, the Armenian schools being restricted by Government to a purely elementary course, and having the rank only of schools of two classes.[1] They are three in number and are attended by 700 boys, besides two institutions which dispense instruction to 500 girls. The Russian State school is said to be limited in accommodation, and is attended by no more than 140 youths, principally Armenians. The inhabitants have been agitating for a Russian *gymnasium* or High School, such as has been vouchsafed to their less numerous compatriots at Erivan. They attribute their ill-success and the greater advantages enjoyed by Akhaltsykh to the fact that the latter town belongs to the Government of Tiflis while they are dependent upon Erivan. At Alexandropol I heard little of the much-vexed school question, which I shall treat in a subsequent chapter. But the inhabitants were loud in their complaints that, while forbidden to raise the standard of their own schools, they were not provided with adequate education by Government. Such a situation is typical of the application of Russian methods, and would be humorous if its results were less grave.

I must have spent much of my time in attending the various ceremonies attendant upon the wedding of a M. Ter Mikelean. I think I may have come near to getting married myself, the lady being none other than his intended bride. For on one occasion, when we were all assembled in a lower apartment, and, the bride's father being dead, her nearest male relation was conducting her sale by formal auction, my own bid seemed for some time to

[1] For the explanation of this term see the chapter on Erivan.

hold its own against all rivals, amounting, so far as I remember, to twenty pounds. I was relieved at discovering that there was a want of reality about the proceedings, and that it had been arranged beforehand that the damsel should be knocked down to the chosen bridegroom. When we were taken upstairs, and, among a throng of women, were permitted to gaze upon the girl's features, my apprehensions were almost converted into regret. Such a sweetly pretty face, recalling the favourites of Andrea del Sarto, with their fresh simplicity and candid eyes! I was in part rewarded by her consenting to form the centre of a wedding group, and thus to enable me to perpetuate her youthful beauty (Fig. 26). The lady with the head-dress, standing behind her, is her amiable mother, a type of Giovanni Bellini; while the gentleman with his back to the wall is M. Vahan Barsamiantz, engaged in an export business of the fruits of the castor-oil plant, which is cultivated in the valley of the Araxes. The musicians in the foreground were the most lively and strenuous performers I have ever met, being rarely silent and never tired. Every member of the group was an Armenian. When night came there were dances in the open air to the light of streaming torches. The strains were not yet hushed as we regained our encampment, which we had placed in a shabby garden of the suburbs.



FIG 26. WEDDING PARTY AT ALEXANDROPOL

I must not omit a notice of an excursion which we made to the neighbouring cloister of Marmashen. It is a monument of the period of the mediæval kings of Armenia, and is of the same order of architecture as those at Ani. It is situated about five miles north of Alexandropol, on the rocky banks of the Arpa Chai. As we drove over the plain, we remarked that ploughing had not yet commenced, and that the stubble still stood in the somewhat stony soil. Not a fence or other boundary, and not a single tree diversified the expanse of ground. Sowing takes place in April, rains fall in May and June, and the harvest is gathered during July and August. The surroundings of the monastery are bleak and unrelieved by vegetation; the church and chapels are falling into ruin, and rise from among piles of débris. My illustration (Fig. 27) displays the principal edifice from the south-west and the chapel which adjoins it on the south. A companion but larger chapel on the north is hidden from view,[1] and a third structure of the same order, but more distant on that further side, is beyond the range of the picture. The visitor cannot fail to admire the simplicity of the design of the church and the absence of any excrescences. The device of the niche has been used to lighten the wall on the east, where the plan of the interior requires an apse and two side chapels. Each of the two recesses upon that side has a depth of 3 feet 8 inches; while the similar features on the north and south sides have probably been added for the sake of uniformity. The wall

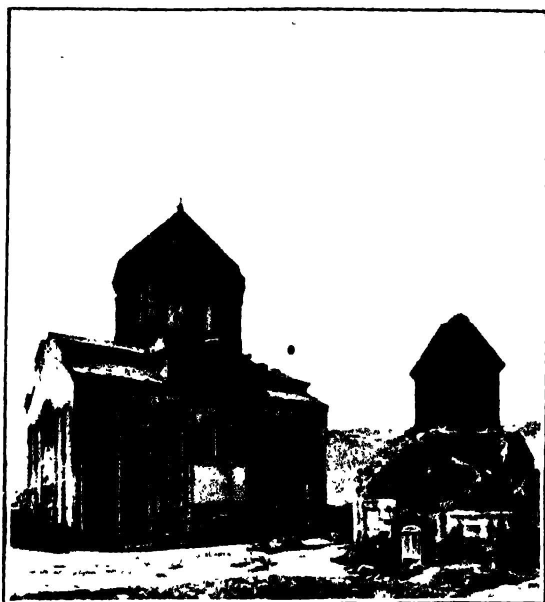


FIG. 27. CHURCH OF MARMASHEN FROM S.W.

[1] Fragments of the walls of this building alone survive.

spaces have been diversified with elegant false arcades, and the window on the west is framed in a band of exquisite chiselling. All these features will be familiar to my reader when he has read my account of Ani, and I need not, therefore, dwell upon them in this place. He will also become acquainted with the personages who erected these edifices, and whose names figure in the long inscriptions on the walls of the church. From these we learn that it was built by none other than the great prince Vahram, the hero of the resistance offered by the inhabitants of Ani to the occupation of their city by the Byzantine Cæsar. It was commenced in the year A.D. 988, and does not appear to have been completed until 1029.[1] On the other hand, a memorial tablet, inserted into the wall on the west, contains a well-preserved inscription which we copied, giving the date of 470 of the Armenian era, or A.D. 1021. Presumably the building would have been in use at that time. According to an inscription on the north wall it was extensively restored in A.D. 1225 by descendants of Vahram.[2] The wife of that prince and perhaps, too, his own remains were buried at Marmashen.

The interior, a nave and two narrow aisles, has a length of 61 feet, measured to the head of the apse, and a breadth of 34 feet. The daïs of the apse is not less than 4 feet in height, the face of the daïs being decorated with a sculptured frieze of intricate design. In other respects the masonry is free of ornament, and the walls have been left bare. The name of the cloister is said to be a corruption of Marmarashen, which would signify the marble edifice. Yet the material used is a pink volcanic stone, and I did not observe any marble about the church. A porch extended at one time the whole breadth of the façade, and must have had a length of nearly 37 feet. A prominent feature of this approach were four octagonal pillars, of which the remains still exist. They have a circumference of 7 feet 10 inches in the shaft. I cannot say that I admire the dome, and it is, perhaps, due in its present form to the restoration of the thirteenth century.

[1] So the inscription on the south wall, as rendered by Brosset (*Voyage archéologique*, 3me rapport, p. 86; and *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 64). [2] Brosset, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER X

TO ERIVAN

DURING our stay at Alexandropol it had required no small effort to detach our minds from the paramount object with which they were filled. Every day, every hour, which separated us from Ararat diminished the prospects of a successful ascent. We were impatient, and anxious to leap the intervening stages, like pilgrims almost in sight of their long-sought shrine.

It was, therefore, with a sense of relief that, at one o'clock, on the 12th of September, we set out from the city in the direction of Alagöz. We were to make for the passage between the volcano and the border mountains, and to rest in that valley for the night. The road is a mere track, yet we were able to engage a private carriage to take us to Erivan. One is astounded in the East at the performances of a victoria, should the necessities of a European or the ostentation of an Oriental have summoned such an object of luxury to their wilds. Our luggage accompanied us in a springless waggon, which, like the carriage, was privately horsed. The post road to Erivan makes the long deviation down the valleys of the border ranges to the junction with the road from Tiflis at the station of Delijan.

The great plain lay around us, level and devoid of objects, like the bosom of a sea. Before us stretched the mountain, the unwieldy bulk of a colossus, a formidable barrier to the country on the south. In such an expanse the human note is overwhelmed by Nature; one hardly notices the signs of the presence of ubiquitous man. There are villages which you scarcely see until you have passed within their precincts; such were Tapa Dolak, through which we drove at a quarter before one, and Golgat, which we reached at four o'clock. Both are inhabited by Armenians; neither possesses a school or school-house, but the

second owns and the first was building a church. After obtaining a view, on our right hand, of two considerable Armenian villages, we arrived at Norashen, where we were to rest the horses, at half-past four o'clock. It is an Armenian settlement with ninety-five tenements and a population of 900 souls, and it was in process of erecting a school. Let the reader picture to himself rude structures of stone and wood and earth, which, at one end, issue upon irregular little lanes, and, at the other, are buried into a slope of the ground. Through such entrances you pass to subterraneous chambers which serve as stables and as living rooms. In the midst of these sordid surroundings four stone walls are a prominent object; they belong to a little chapel, which has a roof of sods and a bare interior; the bells are hung in a wooden structure at the side. Men with tanned complexions, deep wrinkles, and bent knees issue from the tenements and slouch along the lanes. Children crowd about you, their little stomachs unduly swollen and barely covered by a single cotton shirt. Nobody can read or write; we questioned several. Such is the description which, with variations, applies to most of these villages, and is true of Norashen.

With what emotion one turned to the contemplation of the magnificent landscape which was outspread at our feet! The squalor of man, the grandeur of his natural environment—the reflection recurs and recurs in the East. We were standing on the lower slopes of the mountain, some 1500 feet above the floor of the plain. A gentle incline, of which the surface was checkered with alternate patches of fallow and stubble, stretched away from a foreground of loose stones and garnered corn-land to the dim lights and opaline mists of a vast amphitheatre, where the expanse of level land was confined and choked by a wide girdle of mountains—long volcanic outlines and fantastic shapes of cone and peak mingling with the gloom of the distance and the gloom of the sky. But the zenith was intensely blue, and we breathed a strong, yet sunlit air. Behind us, in the opposite segment of the heaven, white, luminous clouds touched and concealed the snowy region where Alagöz sits enthroned; yet we were able to observe that the snow lies in drifts within that region, for many of the flatter places were free of snow. A prominent feature, to which I have already alluded, is the manner in which the heart, or central rock mass of the volcano, is seen to rise beyond the edge of a rounded bank of softer texture, which follows the inner ridge at a respectful interval, and appears to be separated from it

by a deep ravine. One cannot fail to observe the contrast between the roundness and softness of the outwork and the steep sides and black rocks of the inner ridge.

In fact, as you skirt the slopes of the volcano, you never touch the sides which mount immediately to the snows. You follow along the direction of gently vaulted banks of soil, parallel to the upstanding core of the mass. Their surface is patched with cultivation to a height which has been estimated at 8300 feet.[1] The herbage is sweet and produces excellent crops of hay; the earth is black and rich. Soon after leaving Norashen—we started at about six—you turn the flank of the range which meets the volcano at right angles, and then recedes in a hollow, concave to the shield-shaped pile. You enter the passage between Alagöz and the border mountains, and you arrive at the head waters of the southward-flowing streams. In this region are situated Güzel-dere and Kerwanserai, the first an Armenian village, the second a Kurdish settlement. In the latter we found a station-house maintained by Armenians, who provided us with a guide and a Chinese lantern to take us to the guest-house, distant about two versts, which stands above the village of Haji Khalil. It occupied us some little time, groping our way through the thick darkness, and we did not arrive until eight o'clock.

The little guest-house proved a dreary and comfortless shelter; we sighed for the comparative luxury of a Persian *chapar-khaneh* or the cleanliness of a Swiss hut. A fetid odour exuded from the peeling walls and cracked flooring, and legions of active fleas rose from beneath the boards. We slept, as we might, on the wooden *takht* or daïs, until, at half-past one, the door thundered with heavy knocks. After some parley the intruders were admitted to our chamber—was it a dream, or whence issued these strange shapes? One awaited the wild *staccato*, followed by the flowing iambic:—

ἄστρων κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χεῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι.[2]

Yet the floor, the walls, the companions were all real—everything, except those figures at the door. The flicker of a lamp

[1] Radde in *Petermann's Mitth.*, 1876, p. 147.

[2] ". . . contemplate the company of the stars by night, and them that bring winter and summer to mortals, the radiant potentates conspicuous in the heaven" (Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, ls. 4-7).

was reflected upon their bearded faces and bare necks, upon the heavy folds of the brown draperies hanging about their shoulders, upon the blunt ends of their wooden staves. Did they proclaim the line of bonfires?—Watchmen, stationed by an unseen hand to guard us, and come to announce the break of day. The break of day? It cost us a pang to convince them of their error; we were loth to commence fresh contests with the fleas. Poor watchmen, who had forestalled the stars with longing for the morning! How many times was Troy taken in watchmen's dreams?

September 13.—At a quarter to six we were on the road. A

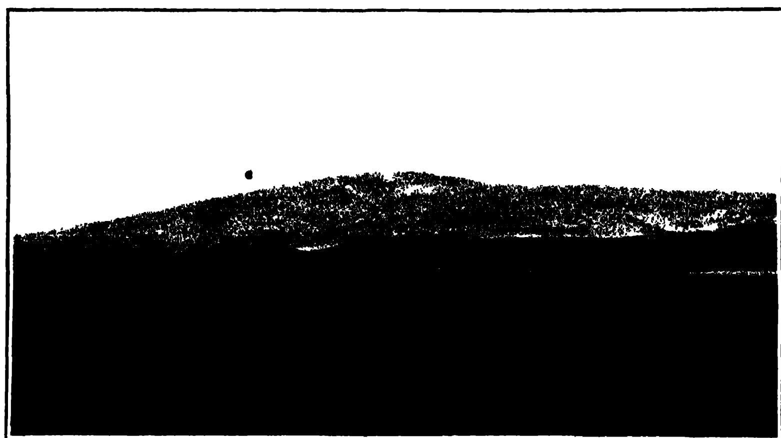


FIG. 28. ALAGÖZ FROM THE HEAD WATERS OF THE ABARAN.

chill was in the air, and heavy, sleepy clouds lay on the ground. But the zenith was softly blue, and a pleasant light fell on the valley with its spacious floor and ample expanse of sky. Our station was situated at a slightly higher altitude than the threshold of the pass; I should estimate our elevation, from the readings of my barometers, at about 7000 feet. After an hour's drive, our track joined a newly-made road, metalled and ditched on either side; progress was fairly rapid down the incline of the valley, parallel with the current of the Abaran. This road was intended to serve as the postal avenue to Erivan from Alexandropol, and it bifurcates from the existing post road; but a series of misfortunes appear to have attended its construction, and it had not yet been used by the post. Verst after verst we drove along it, through a landscape which changes little from the

features at the entrance of the pass. On our right hand rose the huge volcano, no longer an extended horizontal outline, but a shield-shaped mass, bellying upwards to the rim of a crater, which circled from us with a wide sweep (Fig. 28). The slopes of the mountain were inclined at an angle of scarcely more than eleven degrees—soft convexities, broken into gullies and little hummocks, and, here and there, strewn with a shingle of greenish hue. The peaks had gradually disappeared as we rounded the base of the pile—a transition of which the phases were frequently withdrawn from observation through the incidence of clouds. On our left, at varying but always ample interval, the outer spurs of the border mountains described a parallel half-circle with the contour of Alagöz—one might almost mistake them for some outer shell of the volcano, so closely did they appear to follow the curve of its base. But, unlike their big neighbour, the slopes of these outworks were covered with brushwood, which developed into dwarf trees as we advanced. The floor of the valley revealed in most parts the hand of the reclaimer, by the side of a stretch of turf, by the margin of a rotting marsh. Yet mile after mile we could see no settlement; we seldom met a wayfarer, except for some drivers with a string of donkeys, laden with grapes from the valley of the Araxes, and a group of supple Kurdish girls. At a quarter to eight we drew rein for a few minutes in the large Armenian village of Bash Abaran. The inhabitants were busy getting in their corn from the open; here and there it had not yet been cut. In another hour we opened out a vista of Ararat, and, at a quarter to ten, we feasted our eyes upon the whole majestic fabric, before descending into the village of Ali Kuchak.

One may safely say of the scene which expanded before us that it is unsurpassed upon the surface of our globe. Nor is it difficult to account for the strength and permanence of the impression which it produces upon the mind. Nowhere has Nature worked on a scale more stupendous; yet on none of her works has she bestowed greater unity of conception, a design more harmonious, surroundings more august. Whatever mysteries compose the spell of the wide ocean and the open firmament, all the exquisite shades of light which temper the gloom of a northern climate, all the many-coloured radiance of the south, have been lavished upon the panorama which centres in Ararat and is spread like a kingdom at his feet.

Seen at this distance—measured on the map it is a space of fifty-six miles to the summit—the mountain is little more than an outline upon the horizon; yet what an outline! what a soul in those soaring shapes! Side by side stand two of the most beauteous forms in Nature, the pyramid and the dome. Both are developed on lines of almost ideal perfection, with proportions which startle the eye in spite of all their symmetry; and both are supported by a common base. The pyramid is one, and the dome is one; yet the structure is single which they combine to raise. From the dim east into the dim west you follow that long-drawn profile, rising from a distant promontory, declining to a distant promontory, centring in the roof of the dome, in the peak of the cone. The dome has an elevation of 17,000 feet, the cone of nearly 13,000 feet; and the base reclines on a plain which forms the greatest depression in the relief of Armenia, and which has an altitude of scarcely more than 3000 feet above the sea.

The standpoint from which we looked upon the wonders of this landscape were the basal slopes of the opposite colossus of Alagöz, where they descend to that same spacious plain. It is the plain which the Araxes waters; yet we could not see the river, hidden in the unseen hollow of the expanse. Between us and our horizon flat tracts of naked earth stretched away from the stony ground about us to a distant region of half lights and soft mist; above those shadows rose the mountain, bathed in light and luminous vapour, to wreaths of white cloud, hanging to the snows of the dome. On our left hand, a wooded hill—the only spot of verdure in the scene—jutted out into the levels from the border ranges, which here recede from the plain. Its summit outline is broken by a fantastic peak, like the comb of a cock, and it may perhaps be identified with the volcanic elevation of Karniarch. Below us lay the village, a cluster of stacks of *tezek* fuel, and driving smoke, proceeding from scarcely visible huts of mud and stone. Ledges or tongues of rock and cliff projected on our right from the base of Alagöz; they represent the extreme outrunners of the northern mountain and sink into the landscape, like the capes of a rock-bound coast. We were about to leave that coast behind us and to cross the floor of this sea-like plain; hues of ochre were lightly laid upon its gently undulating surface and mingled with the nearer tints of yellow and umber in the stubble and fallow of the cultivated land.

All our thoughts, our whole ambition, were centred on that distant mountain; our emotions satisfied, we reflected that the spot where we were standing was the nearest point which we should reach to the summer resort of Darachichak. It might be possible to hire horses and ride the distance of some twenty miles; all the official world of Erivan would be assembled in that pleasant valley, and we had need of their assistance for our ascent. So, once arrived within the village, we sent for the elder; and we were glad to hear that the place was the seat of a *Pristav,* or head of an administrative group of villages. A lean and lank Armenian responded to our summons; he came with a slouching gait and with sleep in his eyes, and he was engaged in buttoning his long grey coat. The official dress of Russia and the peaked cap of white canvas on such a truly Oriental figure as this! However, he promised to procure us horses, and, putting faith in his official dignity, I decided to split our party into two. My cousin and myself would adventure upon the journey into the mountains; Wesson, Rudolph and the Armenian would proceed in the victoria and with the waggon to the town of Erivan.

Our companions started on their journey, while we with our saddles made our way to a neighbouring village in which the horses were to be found. We were accompanied by the Pristav's man, a sinister-looking villain; the saddles followed on a bullock cart. But at a winding of the path, just after leaving the settlement, the wheels sank into an abysmal depth of mud. I have no doubt that this incident is of daily occurrence, and that neither village would entertain the notion of making a road. The horses were on the meadows; their owners refused to catch them, and we were obliged to essay the task ourselves. But in this open country they eluded all our efforts; we were obliged to return without attaining our end. The Pristav received our maledictions with equanimity, and we were reduced to the tame expedient of two sorry ponies, which were only equal to carrying us to the nearest considerable station on the road to Erivan.

How poor in resources is this magnificent country! what a curse appears to lie on these fertile lands! Our Pristav had the charge of thirty-six villages, of which six were inhabited by Persian Tartars and the remainder by a population of his own race. His district extended from Bash Abaran to Ashtarak; yet he told

us that in the whole of this considerable region there did not exist a single school.

Baffled of our purpose, we mounted our ponies and took to the road to Erivan, two solitary figures in the lonely waste. The provincial capital was over thirty-five miles distant, and it was already half-past four o'clock. The prospect over the plain, which I have just described, is so far deceptive that you underrate the extension of these stony basal slopes. This mistaken estimate is due in part to the position of the hill of Karniarch, which blocks the view towards the south-east. To gain Erivan, you are obliged to round the base of that elevation; nor, in that direction, do the rocky inclines die away in the level campagna before you have reached the gardens of the town. The base of Alagöz appears to mingle with the base of the volcanic masses which line the inner edges of the border range; mile after mile you cross a bleak and boulder-strewn country which sweeps into the plain. To add to our impression of the complete forlornness of this region, a violent storm arose. The immense expanse of heaven was filled with driving clouds, riven by lightning; the torrents roared, and the blast bent the stunted bushes which rise along their margin among the rocks. We were reminded of the famous night upon the Brocken, as our tired ponies tottered forward into the blinding rain. Shelter there was none; it was a case of struggling onwards and taking pleasure in the elemental war. And the road! was there ever outside of Persia such a strange caricature of a road? It wound like a snake, avoiding every hillock; the traffic made short cuts from bend to bend. There were bridges broken in the back with a ford alongside them; there were yawning culverts and parallel tracks avoiding the horrors of the metalled way. Not a soul did we meet, until, as the evening advanced, we passed through some considerable Armenian villages which presented the strange spectacle of a lamp-lit street. But where was Ashtarak, the goal of our journey? should we ever accomplish our self-imposed stage? When our mounts could go no further, my cousin points out a long building by the side of a large church. No door could we see or opening on to the ground, only a lofty verandah with a ladder, a feature which recalled the old lawless times. We clamoured, and were admitted after sundry explanations, and a stable was found for our weary hacks.

We were received by a young Armenian who spoke a little

French, and who ushered us into the presence of a *vardapet* or monastic priest. I regret my inability to place on the page the handsome features of our host, Monseigneur Achote—so he transcribed his rank and name. He told us that we were welcome to the monastery of Mugni, and that he himself happened to be the only priest in residence. Assisted by his clerk, he busied himself about our comforts; clothed us afresh, gave us to eat and drink. Monseigneur belongs to the new school of Armenian ecclesiastics; he has received an excellent education, and possesses wide sympathies and broad views. His room was littered with books and papers; his talk was animated, and one could not doubt that his ardent patriotism was sincere. Next morning—September 14—we visited the church of Mugni, a plain but solid stone structure, quite in the grand style. An open portal, resting on four solid piers, gives access to the doorway with its richly carved mouldings, and is surmounted by a little tower in which the bells are hung. The exterior is of grey stone, varied by blocks of red volcanic rock; here and there carved slabs of such rock have been inserted, a familiar feature in Armenian architecture. The interior is quite plain and the masonry uncovered; so thick are the walls that in the apse you are shown two secret chambers built into the frame of the church. Access to these chambers is obtained by removing a block of stone in the ceilings of two recesses in the apse. In the old lawless times these rooms served as a refuge; they are capacious and receive the light of day. The head of St. George is preserved in a little side chapel, a treasure of considerable value to the monastery. It seemed so strange that our enlightened host should be profiting by the possession of this relic, and I thought that he answered my smile. An inscription informs us that the church was built—or may it not be *restored* or *embellished?*—by Mgr. Peter of Argulis in the year of the Armenian era 1118 or A.D. 1668, with his people's money and his own.

Monseigneur's windows looked out upon a wretched village, which appeared doubly miserable in the cold light. At half-past nine we mounted our ponies, and set out for Ashtarak. Mugni lies to the south of the hill of Karniarch—a name which our native guide pronounced *Garnara.* The surrounding country maintains the stony and inhospitable character of the waste through which we had lately passed. A short ride brought us to the descent into the little township—an oasis of verdure, a pretty

church, with a cluster of roofs and gables, tall poplars, terraces of flat house-tops. But when we had passed within the precincts, this pleasant impression faded; were the crumbling walls of the houses in course of demolition, or was this rude masonry of mud and stone succumbing to the storm of yesterday? We proceeded down a narrow street which is lined with lofty trees and channelled by a swirling stream. Here the owners of the ponies were lying in wait for us; a sure instinct had placed them upon our way. According to the published statistics Ashtarak possesses some 3000 inhabitants, all of Armenian race.

By eleven o'clock we had procured horses and were again on the road to Erivan. The entire region is strewn with rocks and presents the same bleak appearance, except where, here and there, a stream descends the barren slopes and sustains a slender line of green. In such places you may discern the rare site of a village, a few poplars, the grouped architecture of a church. At length, after long winding between the stony eminences, we opened out a view over the great plain. The sky had not yet cleared, and mists obscured the forms of the mountains; but the whole lap of the plain was revealed. Patches of soft blue relieved the surface of the dim country—the vegetation of the rich campagna about the banks of the Araxes. We rode on, always descending, over these stony uplands, until they dipped to the floor of the level ground. Luxuriant gardens filled the gently-pursing hollow, intensely green after the heavy rain of the preceding day. Pools of water lay on the road; the water-courses were brimming over. The orchards were clothed with fruit of ideal perfection in form and colour; we admired the size and brilliant hues of the clustering peaches, side by side with the bending branches of the apple and the pear trees, with the deep shade of the walnut and the mulberry trees. Ripe grapes hung in abundance from the low vine-stocks. . . . Such are the outskirts of Erivan, a town embowered in foliage. We reached the central park at half-past one o'clock.

CHAPTER XI

TO ARARAT

ERIVAN is a town of gardens in which a network of irrigation channels preserves from early spring into late autumn the perfection of the foliage. In the heart of the business quarter is situated a little park, disposed into shady alleys and promenades for the citizens, but presenting also pathless spaces of forest land. We were tempted to pitch our tents in the secluded portion. But the storm had soaked the soil; solid walls were a preferable shelter. We encamped in the naked rooms of a building which faced the park and bore the pretentious inscription, *Hôtel de Londres*. Our first care was to dispatch a mounted messenger to General Frese, Governor of Erivan, who was residing at the summer resort of Darachichak. I begged His Excellency to instruct his people to assist us in our preparations, and to furnish us with a letter to the commandant of the Cossacks, stationed on the slopes of Ararat.

On the morning of the 16th of September our courier returned and informed us that the Governor had sent the necessary instructions to the *Nachalnik*, or chief of the district police. I had already made the acquaintance of that important official, chief of police for the district of Erivan, and acting chief of police for the town of Erivan. A brief experience had taught me that without his active co-operation all private efforts were made in vain; the forces one set in motion returned in useless circles to the point from which they had started. But it so happened that the Nachalnik was an extremely amiable person; he had helped us, he would help us again. Without delay he provided us with a letter to the Cossacks; nothing remained but to make a start. But in the East one can never count upon being able to proceed on one's journey before the cavalcade is already on the outward road. I had read of the difficulties which had been

experienced by previous travellers in finding horses in the district neighbouring Ararat to convey them to the higher slopes. I had therefore made contracts with owners in Erivan to provide us with the necessary animals. When I summoned these individuals, they were no longer forthcoming, they were nowhere to be found. I then endeavoured to hire a carriage, to take us as far as Aralykh, with the resolve to trust to fortune later on. I offered handsome prices to several drivers; they pleaded the badness of the road and refused to go. Finally I had recourse to the posting authorities; they swore that in all their stables not a single horse remained. Convinced of the futility of further steps on my own initiative, I sought out the private abode of the chief of police. The hour of the mid-day meal was already over; a fierce sun was beating upon the silent streets.

I crossed the shady alleys of the little park, in which not another person moved. A few steps through the blinding glare of an adjacent side-road, deep in white dust, brought me to the enclosure which surrounds the residence of the Nachalnik. I knocked at the little postern door. A drowsy servant opened to me, and, in answer to my enquiries, informed me that his master was asleep. Compromising for once with the valuable principle of always addressing oneself to the supreme authority, I turned away and walked to the station of the town police. But not a single officer was in attendance at headquarters; a couple of men were dozing in the guard room, outstretched upon the wooden seats. No other course was open but to arouse the Nachalnik; I returned and again knocked at the little door. It was pleasant to be offered a seat in a spacious verandah, overlooking a garden; nor was it long before the master of the house appeared. There are individuals in whom a tendency to corpulence, while it appears to dispose them favourably towards their fellow-men, has induced a provoking habit of restful satisfaction, and has built up a wall of self-possession against which nervous temperaments beat in vain. The Nachalnik was not wanting in these passive qualities; and I could not doubt that they would be exercised on the present occasion as I observed the approach of his burly form. The white tunic was partially buttoned, the hair was matted on the brow, the eyes were still heavy with sleep. I quickly apprised him of the nature and extent of our troubles; how the owners of our hired horses had broken their contracts, how the various forms of transport had been successively requisitioned, with equal failure

in every case. Tartar pony men, Molokan *droshky* drivers, Armenian posting contractors—not a man among them could be induced to stir. Our luggage, accompanied by Wesson and Rudolph, had left that morning in a waggon of the post; we ourselves were determined to follow them, if necessary on foot. To this petulance he replied with the utmost composure, to the effect that the people were free to make their own bargains, and that he could not compel them to go. It was the familiar story, the honourable attempt to rule the East upon Western principles, the patient endeavour, rich both in humour and in pathos, to infuse the drowsy mass with the elements of vitality and make it respond to those inducements of enlightened self-interest which move the peoples of the West. In the mouth of the Nachalnik the enunciation of this principle was not without a certain vein of almost tragic irony. Himself the child of a race which has scarcely yet assimilated the motives and the restraints of civilised life, he had been transplanted from the frozen North to this burning valley; and the hot sun was already drying up those scanty springs of action which had so recently been set free. It was plain that the position could not be carried directly; but it occurred to me at that moment that there was a weak place on another side. This heavy man, whose languid negatives and long-drawn affirmatives were capable of almost infinite resistance, could be stirred to a fury of words and gestures by the suggestion that his authority had been slighted, or his orders left unfulfilled. He had been endowed with a talent, rare in one of his temperament, for grandiose histrionic expression; and it was not so much, I think, the matter at issue which moved him, as the favourable opportunity which was offered in such circumstances for a luxurious display of his talent to himself. I had observed in the garden the graceful figure of the young sergeant whom he had lent to me the day before. He had changed his travelling dress for the elegant skirted coat of Georgia; a row of silvered cartridge-heads glittered upon his breast, and the dark moustache was carefully pencilled upon the clean-shaven cheeks. I beckoned him to me and begged him to confirm what I said. The sergeant had been obliged to use the name of the Nachalnik, and in that name to threaten horse-owners and posting contractors in turn. Yet not a man among them could be made to move. I added that it would seem as if, in the absence of the Governor, there was an end to all authority in the town. At this speech the

Nachalnik rose from his chair and summoned his servants about him. He cursed the mongrel race of horse-keepers, Persians or Tartars, the blood of brigands all. Who could tell in what holes these thieves were hiding? We should go by the post, and post horses *must* be found. Arrived at Aralykh, the Cossacks would mount us on their own horses; and we should no doubt be able to impress some animals in the neighbourhood for the transport of our tents. His emissaries flew in all directions, with the result that, within the respectable space of three hours, a post cart, drawn by a pair of horses, was standing at our door.

Erivan is situated on the northern skirts of the valley of the Middle Araxes—a valley distinguished by its important geographical situation, by the great works of natural architecture which are aligned upon it, and by the high place which it holds both in legend and in history as the scene of momentous catastrophes in the fortunes of the human race. The natural avenue from east to west across the tableland of Armenia, it gives easy access to the heart of Asia Minor from the shores of the Caspian Sea. The nations about and beyond the Caspian have found their way along this avenue to the coasts of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean; and, while tradition connects these scenes with the site of Paradise, the bloody wars which they have witnessed have suggested to a graceful writer the appropriate recollection of the curse of the flaming sword.[1] Along the line of the 40th degree of latitude a succession of plains extend across the tableland, varying in their depression below the higher levels, watered by the Araxes and by the upper course of the Western Euphrates, and each giving access to the other by natural passages. The first is this valley of the Araxes, with its more narrow continuation westwards through the district between Kagyzman and Khorasan; the second is the plain of Pasin; the third the plain of Erzerum. Yet while the plains of Pasin and of Erzerum are situated respectively at an altitude of 5500 and 5750 feet, the valley of the Araxes in the neighbourhood of Erivan is only 2800 feet above the sea. Both on the north and south of this considerable depression, even the plainer levels of the tableland attain the imposing altitude of 7000 feet, while its surface has been uplifted by volcanic action into long and irregular convexities of mountain and hill and hummock.

[1] Bryce, *Transcaucasia and Ararat*, 4th and revised edition, London, 1896, p. 312.

On either side of the extensive plain which borders the course of the Middle Araxes rise mountains of astounding proportions and of large variety of form. Let us dwell for a moment on the character of the northern barrier, which closes the prospect from the slopes of Ararat at a distance of from 30 to 50 miles. The immense bulk of Alagöz extends across the horizon from the longitude of Ararat to the districts adjoining the left bank of the Arpa Chai. In that direction the mass occupies a space of about 40 miles, rising from the level tracts through which the Araxes flows to a height of over 13,000 feet and inclined from north of east to south of west. The snowy fangs of the shattered crater are situated a little west of the longitude of the dome of Ararat; from those peaks the outline of the mountain is shadowed on either side in an almost horizontal bar. On the west the streams of molten matter have met with little resistance to their onward flow; the eastern slopes have been confined by the bulwark of the border ranges, and are of comparatively insignificant extent. Where the base gathers beyond the river is a distance from the slopes of Ararat of about 35 miles; the two summits are nearly 60 miles apart. Yet so large is the scale of this colossal mountain, and so even the surface of the intervening plain, that, seen through the clear atmosphere of an Eastern climate, it fills the eye with its huge presence, sweeping the valley with massive foundations, and drawn across the sky in a long and rounded bank, broken only by the trident of shining peaks.

Such is the character, to a point about north of Ararat, of the northern wall of this valley of the Araxes—the length of a single mountain, an unbroken barrier from west to east. At that point the mass of Alagöz meets the spurs of the border ranges, and its base mingles with the base of the volcanic elevations which rise along their inner edge. These elevations continue the wall of mountain eastwards, but incline it towards the south; they come forward in front of the giant volcano and narrow the plain. Yet so gradual is the transition that it is scarcely perceptible; until the eye is awakened by the change in the sky-line, so even before, so restless now, fretted by the shapes of cones and little craters which, behind the soft convexities of flanking outworks, feature the chain which separates the basin of Lake Sevan from the waters which wash the base of Ararat.

On the southern side of the great plain there is a remarkable

correspondence with the northern border in the constitution of the mountain masses, and an interesting difference in the manner in which they are disposed. On the north you have first a single mountain, and then a mountain system; on the south the line commences with a mountain system and ends with a single mass. On the north the mountain system steps out in advance of the mountain; on the south, by a happy reversal of the order, the mountain stands forward alone. Alagöz and the belt south of Lake Sevan are answered by the Ararat system and by the fabric of Ararat.

The range which I have termed the Ararat system is known in the country under the name of Aghri Dagh, a name which is equally applied to Ararat, but of which the roughness on the palate appears to express with greater felicity the rugged character of the system to which Ararat belongs. From the wild and mountainous country which, about the 42nd degree of longitude, borders the right bank of the Upper Araxes before it enters the plain of Pasin, there extends across the plateau in an easterly direction a long and comparatively narrow range, which, skirted on the one side by the course of the Araxes, and on the other by the plain of Alashkert, composes the spine of this central region of the tableland, and is interposed as a barrier between north and south. The appearance of the chain presents a striking contrast to the convex shapes which feature the adjacent landscapes; the sides are abrupt, the summits sharp, and the peaks rise from deep valleys to a height which reaches over 11,000 feet. Where the Araxes leaves the narrows near the town of Kagyzman, this range is seen massed upon the right bank of the river; and after following the stream along the 40th degree of latitude, it inclines to the south-east. Aided by this slight inclination in the direction of its southern barrier, the valley rapidly expands, and attains its greatest dimensions at a point just south of Alagoz. It is at that point that the western slope of Ararat, which has risen in advance of this satellite system from a low cape in the west, begins to gather in height and volume, concealing the rough features of these obsequious mountains behind the royal sweep of a long train.

At the back of this even western slope a pass of about 7000 feet connects the fabric of Ararat with the spinal system which it succeeds and resumes. Ararat takes up the line of the southern border, and draws his entire length along the valley in a direction

from north-west to south-east (Frontispiece). There he stands, like some vast cathedral, on the floor of the open plain. The human quality of this natural structure cannot fail to impress the eye; and, although its proportions are not less gigantic than those of the opposite mass of Alagöz, it contrasts with the Cyclopean forms of that neighbouring mountain a subtle grace of feature and a harmonious symmetry of design. Slowly the long slope rises from the western distance, a gently undulating line; and, as it rises, the base gradually widens, advancing with almost imperceptible acclivity into the expanse of plain. So it continues, always rising against the sky-ground, always gathering at the base, until at a height of 13,500 feet it reaches the zone of perpetual snow. The summit region of Ararat presents the appearance of a vast dome of snow, crowning a long oval figure of which the axis is from north-west to south-east. The whole length of this roof, on its north-eastern side, is exposed to the valley of the Araxes. The vaulting is less pronounced upon the west than on the east, and ascends through a succession of snow-fields to the highest point of the dome. The average inclination of this north-western slope, where it rises more immediately towards the summit from the almost horizontal train, is only 18°, while its whole length has been computed by Parrot at no less than 20 miles. From the massive roof, which attains a maximum elevation of nearly 17,000 feet above the sea, or 14,000 feet above the plain, the outline sinks by a steeper but still easy gradient towards the south-east; the snow-covered slope dips at an angle of about 30°, and the side of the dome, when seen from that point of the compass, presents the appearance of an almost perfect cone. The south-eastern side of Ararat is encumbered below the snow-line by banks or causeways of piled-up rocks, which branch off from wedge-shaped ridges descending fanwise from the summit region, and fall into the plain. On the south-east these causeways narrow the fork of an upland valley, of which the saddle is placed at a height of 8800 feet. This valley separates the greater from the lesser Ararat, and determines the extension of the south-eastern slope. The horizontal distance of the valley from the summit of the greater Ararat is about 5 miles. From this saddle the outline of the fabric rises, and now more rapidly than before. The shape of a beautiful pyramid is presented; the pointed summit reaches an altitude of about 13,000 feet, and is placed at a distance from

the valley of only [illegible] miles. The south-eastern slope of this lesser mountain at first declines with rapid gradients, which give sharpness to the graceful cone, and then is drawn through the eastern distance, a gently undulating outline, sinking to a dim promontory in the east.

Such is the profile and such the appearance of the majestic structure upon which eye and mind dwell. When we come to investigate the underlying principle, we find that, along a line of upheaval which has been uniform in a direction from north-west to south-east, two mountains have been reared by volcanic action, their axes following the line of upheaval and their summits 7 miles apart. The south-eastern slope of the greater mountain and the north-western side of the smaller are contiguous at an altitude of about 8000 feet; they meet, as we have seen, in a fork or valley at an elevation which ranges between 7500 and 8800 feet. In other words, this valley is the point of intersection between the bases of either mountain; and that part of the fabric which lies below it may be regarded as the common foundation of both. But the base of the smaller and more pointed mountain is merged into the base of the larger and less steep; and the forms of the lower portion of the structure continue the contours of Great Ararat as they sweep away to the south-east. The pyramid of Little Ararat rises directly from the upland valley; Great Ararat rises from the floor of the plain. These features lend unity to the whole fabric, and preserve an exactly proportionate relation between the shape and size of the two mountains and the protraction of their basal slopes.

The base or foundation of the Ararat fabric gathers immediately from the surface of the plain, advancing ever further into the even country as the weight of the upper structure grows. If the ground plan of the entire fabric may be described as a long elliptical figure of which the axis is from north-west to south-east, then the point at which the base is most developed lies north-east of the summit of Great Ararat, in the latitude of Erivan. When already, along the axis of this figure, we have followed the long-drawn outline from the cape in the distant west to where, beyond the Little Ararat, it slowly falls away into the east, the eye turns naturally to the face of the mountain, and dwells with ever-increasing admiration upon the subtle structural qualities there displayed—the combination of grace with extraordinary solidity, the easy transition from the lower to the middle slopes, and of these

to the uppermost seams. From the margin of the marshes which border the right bank of the Araxes the ground commences to incline; yet so gradual is at first the rise that, if we measure on our base plan, we find that it is not more than about 3000 feet within a space of 10 miles. If it be permissible, in the gradual process from one gradient to another, to fix a division between the upper structure and the base, the dividing line may be drawn at an elevation of about 5800 feet, at a distance from the summit of 6½ miles, and of 10 miles from the floor of the plain. Beyond that line, the seams which mount to the dome of snow appear to commence their long climb; the eye follows them on their upward course until they attain the summit region and end in a long cornice of snow. The extraordinary elevation of Ararat above the plain of the Araxes—it may be doubted whether there exists in the world another mountain which rises immediately from a level surface to such a height—is balanced and controlled by this broad and massive base, and by the exquisite proportions of the upper structure which rises to the snowy roof. Yet neither the strength nor the symmetry of this admirable fabric has been proof against decay. Momentous convulsions from within have completed the work of gradual corrosion, and have opened a wide breach in the very heart of the mountain, where it faces the river and the plain. From the snow-beds of the lofty cornice to the base at the gathering of the seams the whole side of Ararat has been fractured and rent asunder; the standing portion overhangs the recess with steep walls, which spread within it perpetual gloom. Further east, just in advance of the saddle which divides the Ararats, a grassy hill of unwieldy shape and flat summit interrupts the basal slopes, and offers an isolated contrast to the symmetry of the neighbouring forms. The chasm of Akhury and the hill of Takjaltu are minor features in the structure of Ararat which are seen and recognised from afar.

But most of all, as we realise the vision, which in the noblest shapes of natural architecture, the dome and the pyramid, fills the immense length of the southern horizon and soars above the landscape of the plain, the essential unity of the vast edifice and the correspondence of the parts between themselves are imprinted upon the mind. If Little Ararat, rising on the flank of the giant mountain, may recall, both in form and in position, the minaret which, beside the vault of a Byzantine temple, bears witness to a conflicting creed, this contrast is softened in the natural structure

by the similarity of the processes which have produced the two neighbours, and by their intimate connection with one another as constituents in a single plan. In this respect they suggest a comparison to a stately ship at sea, with all the close weaving and interdependence of hull and masts and sails. In the harmony of a common system each supplements and continues the other, and what Great Ararat is to the western portion of the fabric Little Ararat is to that on the east. The long north-western slope of the larger mountain is answered on the south-east by the train which sweeps from the side of the smaller towards the mists of the Caspian Sea; and there is the same correspondence between the slopes which are contiguous as between those which are most remote. The steeper side of the greater Ararat is turned towards the needle form of the lesser; and, standing in the valley which divides the two mountains, it appears that the degree of inclination of either slope is in exactly inverse proportion to their size. This pleasing interplay between constancy in essential principles and diversity of form invests the long outline of the dual structure with a peculiar charm. The differing shapes repeat one another, and one base supports the whole.

The plain itself, on the confines of which, and opposite to one another, these several ranges and mountain masses rise, is not unworthy of the works around it, and spreads at their feet a long perspective of open and even ground. Where the valley attains its greatest extension, just west of Erivan, the width of its floor, or level surface, is over twenty miles; and even when the spurs of the Lake Sevan system have inclined the northern boundary to the south, the space between these spurs and the extreme base of Ararat is scarcely less than ten miles. But these are divisions which the mind appreciates and the eye is unable to perceive, so gradual is the transition from one level to another, from plain to mountain-side. On the north the dappled landscape of the campagna mingles with the patches of field and garden which, fed by a number of slender rivulets, clothe the first slopes of Alagöz; on the south the gathering foundations of Ararat are accompanied by an almost insensible inclination in the surface of the dry and sandy soil. From either side the prospect extends unbroken to the long summit lines which confront one another at an interval of nearly sixty miles. From invisible limits in the western distance issues the looping thread of the Araxes, and,

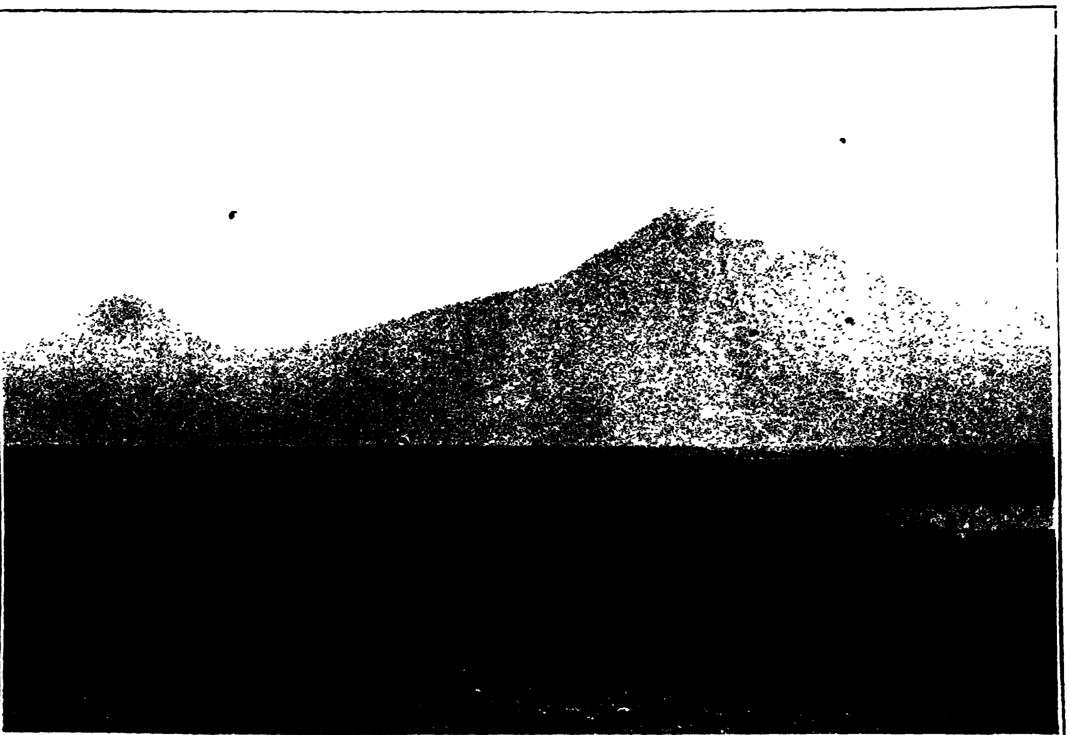


Fig. 29. Ararat from near Aramzalu.

skirting the base of the Ararat fabric, bends slowly south-eastwards and disappears.

The shady walks of the little park were beginning to fill with groups of loungers when, at five o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th of September, we started from the central square of Erivan. A single horseman accompanied us, a *chapar* or courier belonging to the country police. This was the first occasion, since we had entered Russian territory, upon which an escort had been considered necessary by those responsible for our safety. We were approaching the Turkish border, and along that extended mountain frontier acts of brigandage are still not unknown. Yet the prince of brigands, the redoubted Kerim, no longer flouts the nachalniks; and a stream of laden carts and leisurely wayfarers attests the public confidence. Slowly we threaded the clay-built walls of successive orchards, the trees within them bending with fruit, until beyond this oasis of foliage and freshness opened, like an ocean at the mouth of a harbour, the free expanse of plain.

The springless *troika* bumped heavily on the projecting slabs of massive boulders, embedded in the fairway. The road which leads through this stony region is little better than a natural track. The rocky slopes of the northern mountain border extend to the south of Erivan, until they die away into the level surface of the valley a few versts from the town. The evening was advancing and we had no time to linger; we were obliged to put up with the jolting and push on. At the promise of a rouble to the driver the pace quickened; we clutched the bare sides of the little post cart, and tightened our seat on the narrow belt of chains, cushioned with a bundle of hay. At the half stage our courier took his leave and was succeeded by a fresh horseman; and so throughout the journey one horseman gave place to another with only a few minutes' delay. These chapars are young men, native to the country, who find their own mounts; they wear the drab skirted coat of Georgia and the usual lambskin cap. Their stations are often isolated, and are distinguished by the curious structures which adjoin them—lofty platforms, built upon piles, which serve the purpose of watch towers, and from which they command the inequalities of the ground (Fig. 29). Away on our right the distant chain of the Ararat system was shadowed in tints of opal and indigo upon a rich ground of orange and amber hues; the sun sets behind those mountains, and it was

touching with globe of red fire the fantastic peaks of the range. About us the plain lay grey and dim, and all the light and glory was in the western sky. In the south the misty fabric of Ararat loomed more gigantic as night approached; ever higher, before us, in the paling vault of heaven the dome and the pyramid rose. As we neared the first station on the road to Aralykh, the village of Aramzalu, it seemed as if the snowy roof of the mountain were suspended in the sky above our heads, a cold and ghostly island, holding the last glimmer of day.

Of the forty versts (26½ miles), which separate Erivan from Aralykh, we had covered thirteen versts (8½ miles) within the space of an hour and a half. The next stage is the village of Kamarlu, a distance of fifteen versts. Between these two stations the road follows the course of the Araxes, at an interval of two or three miles, and is lined on either side by the walls of extensive gardens, watered by a network of little channels which carry the river into the plain. The character of the soil favours the well-metalled avenue which leads within the fringe of poplars and fruit trees and forms the principal artery of this fertile and populous zone. Night had fallen; the road was clear; the fresh pair of horses were less than an hour in covering the ten miles.

In the post house of Kamarlu, where we again changed horses, we were surprised to find our cook. He had been retained as a hostage for the way-money of the fourgon, which our people had been unable to pay. We released him, and stowed him away with difficulty in a corner of the cart. At Kamarlu you leave the region of gardens, and make direct for the margin of the river, which flows between high banks through a melancholy district of waste land and cracking soil. In this yellow stream, of which the width at this point can scarcely exceed eighty yards, it is difficult to recognise with becoming emotion the haughty flood of the Araxes; yet the river is still crossed by fords or ferries, and still retains, I believe, the ancient distinction that it does not brook a bridge. A standing hawser of woven wire is laid from bank to bank, and the force of the stream propels along it a wide and solid pontoon. Transported without delay to the opposite bank, we made rapid progress along the roadway across low and marshy ground, and arrived just after nine at the row of trim cantonments which compose the military station of Aralykh, eleven versts from Kamarlu (Fig. 30).

We made halt before the entrance to a single-storeyed dwelling

built of clay and painted white. A young Russian officer in white linen tunic received us at the door. As we passed within the house, the burly figure of Rudolph was seen emerging from the shades. Our host had lodged the whole party in his quarters, and would not hear of our living in our tents. At Aralykh there are stationed a squadron of Cossacks and a detachment of regular cavalry. The regulars are employed in protecting the customs, and the Cossacks in hunting the Kurds. It was interesting to notice the contrast—in demeanour as well as in habits—between

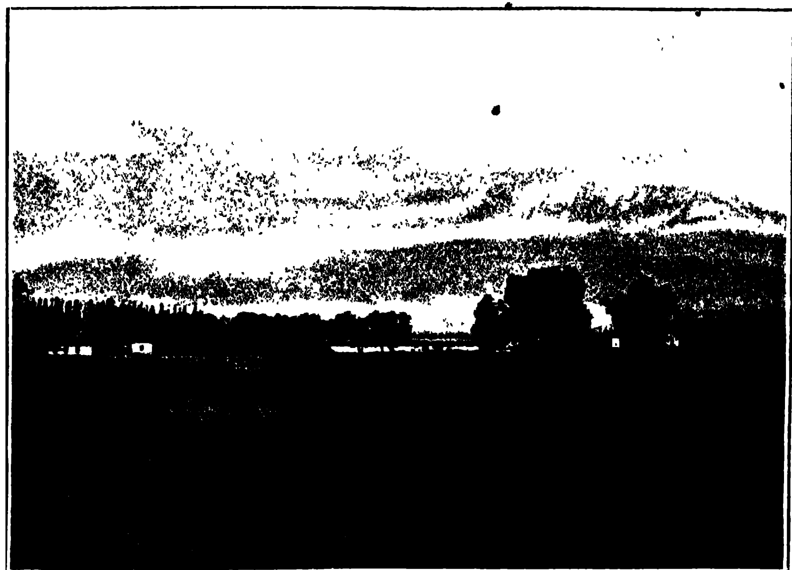


FIG. 30. ARARAT. ARALYKH IN THE FOREGROUND.

the polished young lieutenant of regulars and the kind but boisterous colonel of Cossacks. How small are the differences between opposite nationalities when compared with such essential divisions as these! In this hospitable house the manners of Europe prevailed over those of the East. As we sat in the comfortable room of the Russian officer it was strange to reflect that we were at the foot of Ararat, face to face with the memories of primeval simplicity among the thousand pretty nicknacks of a leisurely writing table and the various implements of a modern toilette. Perhaps the link, which connects all human development, was in this case supplied by a primitive reckoning table with rows of skewered beads.

CHAPTER XII

ASCENT OF ARARAT

NEXT morning the sun had already risen as I let myself down through the open casement of the window and dropped into the garden among the dry brushwood encumbering its sandy floor. Not a soul was stirring, and not a sound disturbed the composure of an Eastern morning, the great world fulfilling its task in silence and all nature sedate and serene. A narrow strip of plantation runs at the back of Aralykh, on the south, sustained by ducts from the Kara Su or Blackwater, a stream which leads a portion of the waters of the Araxes into the cotton fields and marshes which border the right bank. Within this fringe of slim poplars, and just on its southern verge, there is a little mound and an open summer-house—as pleasant a place as it is possible to imagine, but which, perhaps, only differs from other summer-houses in the remarkable situation which it occupies and in the wonderful view which it commands. It is placed on the extreme foot of Ararat, exactly on the line where all inclination ceases and the floor of the plain begins. It immediately faces the summit of the larger mountain, bearing about south-west (Frontispiece).

Before you the long outline of the Ararat fabric fills the southern horizon—the gentle undulations of the north-western slope, as it gathers from its lengthy train; the bold bastions of the snowfields, rising to the rounded dome; and, further east, beyond the saddle where the two mountains commingle, the needle form of the lesser Ararat, free at this season from snow. Yet, although Aralykh lies at the flank of Ararat, confronting the side which mounts most directly from the plain to the roof of snow, the distance from a perpendicular drawn through the summit is over 16 miles. Throughout that space the fabric is

always rising towards the snow-bank 14,300 feet above our heads, with a symmetry and, so to speak, with a rhythm of structure which holds the eye in spell. First, there is a belt of loose sand, about 2 miles in depth, beginning on the margin of marsh and irrigation, and seen from this garden, which directly adjoins it, like the sea-bed from a grove on the shore. On the ground of yellow, thus presented, rests a light tissue of green, consisting of the sparse bushes of the ever-fresh camelthorn, a plant which strikes down into beds of moisture, deep-seated beneath the surface of the soil. Although it is possible, crossing this sand-zone, to detect the growing slope, yet this feature is scarcely perceptible from Aralykh, whence its smooth, unbroken surface and cool relief of green suggest the appearance of an embroidered carpet, spread at the threshold of an Eastern temple for the services of prayer. Beyond this band or belt of sandy ground, composed no doubt of a pulverised detritus, which the piety of Parrot was quick to recognise as a leaving of the flood, the broad and massive base of Ararat sensibly gathers and inclines, seared by the sinuous furrows of dry watercourses, and stretching, uninterrupted by any step or obstacle, hill or terrace or bank, to the veil of thin mist which hangs at this hour along the higher seams. Not a patch of verdure, not a streak of brighter colour breaks the long monotony of ochre in the burnt grass and the bleached stones. All the subtle sensations with which the living earth surrounds us—wide as are the tracts of barren desert within the limits of the plain itself—seem to cease, arrested at the fringe of this plantation, as on a magician's line. When the vapours obscuring the middle slopes of the mountain dissolve and disappear, you see the shadowed jaws of the great chasm—the whole side of the mountain burst asunder from the cornice of the snow-roof to the base, the base itself depressed and hollow throughout its width of about 10 miles. No cloud has yet climbed to the snows of the summit, shining in the brilliant blue.

It was the morning of the 17th of September, a period of the year when the heats have moderated; when the early air, even in the plain of the Araxes, has acquired a suggestion of crispness, and the sun still overpowers the first symptoms of winter chills.[1] The tedious arrangements of Eastern travel

[1] At Aralykh the thermometer ranged between 60° and 70° Fahrenheit between the hours of 6 A.M. and 9 A.M. on the several mornings. At mid-day it rose to about 80°.

occupied the forenoon; and it had been arranged that we should dine with our host, the Lieutenant, before making the final start. Six little hacks, impressed in the district and sadly wanting in flesh, were loaded with our effects; our party was mounted on Cossack horses, which, by the extreme courtesy of the Russian authorities, had been placed at our disposal for a week. We took leave of our new friend under a strong sentiment of gratitude and esteem; but a new and pleasurable surprise was awaiting us, as we passed down the neat square. All the Cossacks at that time quartered in Aralykh—the greater number were absent on the slopes of the mountain, serving the usual patrols—had been drawn up in marching order, awaiting the arrival of their Colonel, who had contrived to keep the secret by expressing his willingness to accompany us a few versts of the way. My cousin and I were riding with the Colonel, and the purpose of these elaborate arrangements was explained to us with a sly smile; the troop with their Colonel were to escort us on our first day's journey, and to bivouac at Sardar Bulakh. The order was given to march in half column. It was perhaps the first time that an English officer had ridden at the head of these famous troops. We crossed the last runnel on the southern edge of the plantation and entered the silent waste.

For awhile we slowly rode through the camelthorn, the deep sand sinking beneath our horses' feet. It was nearly one o'clock, and the expanse around us streamed in the full glare of noon. A spell seems to rest upon the landscape of the mountain, sealing all the springs of life. Only, among the evergreen shrubs about us, a scattered group of camels cropped the spinous foliage, little lizards darted, a flock of sand-grouse took wing. Our course lay slantwise across the base of Ararat, towards the hill of Takjaltu, a table-topped mass, overgrown with yellow herbage, which rises in advance of the saddle between the mountains, and lies just below you as you overlook the landscape from the valley of Sardar Bulakh. Gullies of chalk and ground strewn with stones succeed the even surface of the belt of sand, and in turn give way to the covering of burnt grass which clothes the deep slope of the great sweeping base, and encircles the fabric with a continuous stretch of ochre, extending up the higher seams. Mile after mile we rode at easy paces over the parched turf and the cracking soil. When we had accomplished a space of about 10 miles, and attained a height of nearly 6000 feet, the land broke

about us into miniature ravines, deep gullies, strewn with stones and boulders, searing the slope about the line of the limit where the base may be said to determine and the higher seams begin. Winding down the sides of these rocky hollows, one might turn in the saddle at a bend of the track, and observe the long line of horsemen defiling into the ravine (Fig. 31). I noticed that by far the greater number among them—if, indeed, one might not say all—were men in the opening years of manhood—lithe, well-knit figures, and fair complexions, set round with fair hair. At a nearer view the feature which most impressed me was the smallness of their eyes. They wear the long, skirted coat of Circassia, a thin and worn khaki; the faded pink on the cloth of their shoulder-straps relieves the dull drab. Their little caps of Circassian pattern fit closely round their heads. Their horses are clumsy, long-backed creatures, wanting in all the characteristics of quality; and, as each man maintains his own animal, few among them are shod. Yet I am assured that the breed is workmanlike and enduring, and I have known it to yield most satisfactory progeny when crossed with English racing blood. As we rounded the heap of grass-grown soil which is known as Takjaltu, we were joined by a second detachment of Cossacks, coming from Akhury. Together we climbed up the troughs of

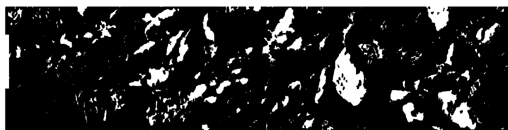


FIG 31. OUR CAVALCADE ON ARARAT.

the ridges which sweep fanwise down the mountain side, and emerged on the floor of the upland valley which leads between the greater and the lesser Ararat, and crosses the back of the Ararat fabric in a direction from south-west to north-east. We were here at an elevation of 7500 feet above the sea, or nearly 5000 feet above the plain. Both the stony troughs and ridges, up which we had just marched, as well as the comparatively level ground upon which we now stood, were covered with a scorched but abundant vegetation, which had served the Kurds during earlier summer as pasture for their flocks, and still sheltered numerous coveys of plump partridges, in which this part of the mountain abounds.

At the mouth of this valley, on the gently sloping platform which its even surface presents, we marked out the spaces of our bivouac, the pickets for the horses, and the fires. Our men were acquainted with every cranny; we had halted near the site of their summer encampment, from which they had only recently descended to their winter quarters in the plain. As we dismounted we were met by a graceful figure, clad in a Circassian coat of brown material let in across the breast with pink silk a young man of most engaging appearance and manners, presented to us as the chief of the Kurds on Ararat who own allegiance to the Tsar. In the high refinement of his features, in the bronzed complexion and soft brown eyes, the Kurd made a striking contrast to the Cossacks—a contrast by no means to the advantage of the Cis-Caucasian race. The young chief is also worthy to be remembered in respect of the remarkable name which he bears. His Kurdish title of Shamden Agha has been developed and embroidered into the sonorous appellation of Hasan Bey Shamshadinoff, under which he is officially known.

From the edge of the platform upon which we were standing the ground falls away with some abruptness down to the base below, and lends to the valley its characteristic appearance of an elevated stage and natural viewing-place, overtowered by the summit regions of the dome and the pyramid, and commanding all the landscape of the plain. On the south-west, as it rises towards the pass between the two mountains—a pass of 8800 feet, leading into Turkish and into Persian territory, to Bayazid or Maku—the extent of even ground which composes this platform cannot much exceed a quarter of a mile. It is choked by the rocky causeways which, sweeping down the side of Great Ararat,

tumble headlong to the bottom of the fork, and, taking the inclination of the ever-widening valley, descend on the north-western skirt of the platform in long, oblique curves of branching troughs and ridges, falling fanwise over the base. The width of the platform, at the mouth of the valley, may be about three-quarters of a mile. It is here that the Kurds of the surrounding region gather, as the shades of night approach, to water their flocks at the lonely pool which is known as the sirdar's well. On the summit of the lesser Ararat there is a little lake, formed of melted snows; the water permeates the mountain, and feeds the sirdar's pool. Close by, at the foot of the lesser mountain, is the famous covert of birch—low bushes, the only stretch of wood upon the fabric, which is entirely devoid of trees. The wood was soon crackling upon our fires, and the water hissing in the pots; but the wretched pack-horses, upon which our tents had been loaded, were lagging several hours behind. We ourselves had reached camp at six o'clock; it was after nine before our baggage arrived. As we stretched upon the slope, the keen air of the summit region swept the valley and chilled us to the skin; the temperature sank to below freezing, and we had nothing but the things in which we stood.[1] Our friends, the Cossack officers, were lavish of assistance; they wrapped us in the hairy coats of the Caucasus, placed *vodki* and partridges before us, and ranged us around their hospitable circle, beside the leaping flames.

But the mind was absent from the picturesque bivouac, and the eye which ranged the deepening shadows was still dazzled by the evening lights. Mind and sense alike were saturated with the beauty and the brilliance of the landscape, which, as you rise towards the edge of the platform after rounding the mass of Takjaltu, opens to an ever-increasing perspective, with ever-growing clearness of essential features and mystery gathering upon all lesser forms. The sun, revolving south of the zenith, lights the mountains on the north of the plain, and fills all the valley from the slopes of Ararat with the full flood of his rays—tier after tier of crinkled hummock ranges, aligned upon the opposite margin of the valley at a distance of over twenty miles, their summit outline fretted with shapes of cones and craters, their faces buttressed in sand, bare and devoid of all vegetation, yet richly clothed in lights and hues of fairyland—ochres flushed with delicate madder,

[1] The temperature at 6.30 P.M. was 50° Fahrenheit, but it sank rapidly in the cold wind.

amethyst, shaded opaline, while the sparse plantations about the river and the labyrinth of the plain insensibly transfigure, as you rise above them, into an impalpable web of grey. In the lap of the landscape lies the river, a thin, looping thread—flashes of white among the shadows, in the lights a bright mineral green. Here and there on its banks you descry a naked mound—conjuring a vision of forgotten civilisations and the buried hives of man. It is a vast prospect over the world. . . . Yet vaster far is the expanse you feel about you beyond the limits of sight. It is nothing but a segment of that expanse, a brief vista from north to east between two mountain sides. On the north the slopes of Great Ararat hide the presence of Alagoz, while behind the needle form of Little Ararat all the barren chains and lonely valleys of Persia are outspread. . . . The evening grows, and the sun's returning arc bends behind the dome of snow. The light falls between the two mountains, and connects the Little Ararat in a common harmony with the richening tints of the plain. There it stands on the further margin of the platform, the clean, sharp outline of a pyramid, clothed in hues of a tender yellow, seamed with violet veins. At its feet, where its train sweeps the floor of the river valley in long and regular folds—far away in the east, towards the mists of the Caspian—the sandy ground breaks into a troubled surface, like angry waves set solid under a spell, and from range to range stretch a chain of low white hummocks, like islands across a sea. Just there, in the distance, beneath the Little Ararat, you see a patch of shining white, so vivid that it presents the appearance of a glacier, set in the burnt waste. It is probably caused by some chemical efflorescence, resting on the dry bed of a lake. All the landscape reveals the frenzy of volcanic forces, fixed for ever in an imperishable mould; the imagination plays with the forms of distant castles and fortresses of sand. Alone the slopes about you wear the solid colours, and hold you to the real world—the massive slopes of Great Ararat, raised high above the world. The wreath of cloud which veils the summit till the last breath of warm air dies has floated away in the calm heaven before the western lights have paled. Behind the lofty piles of rocky causeways, concealing the higher seams, rises the immediate roof of Ararat foreshortened in the sky—the short side or gable of the dome, a faultless cone of snow.

When we drew aside the curtain of our tent next morning, full

daylight was streaming over the open upland valley, and the vigorous air had already lost its edge.[1] The sun had risen high above the Sevan ranges, and swept the plain below us of the lingering vapours which at morning cling like shining wool to the floor of the river valley, or float in rosy feathers against the dawn. The long-backed Cossack horses had been groomed and watered and picketed in line; the men were sitting smoking in little groups or were strolling about the camp in pairs (Fig. 32). A few Kurds, who had come down with milk and provisions, stood



FIG. 32. OUR ENCAMPMENT AT SARDAR BULAKH.

listlessly looking on, the beak nose projecting from the bony cheeks, the brown chest opening from the many-coloured tatters draped about the shoulders and waist.

The space of level ground between the two mountains cannot much exceed three-quarters of a mile. On the east the graceful seams of Little Ararat rise immediately from the slope upon our right, gathering just beyond the covert of low birchwood, and converging in the form of a pyramid towards a summit which has been broken across the point. The platform of this valley is a base for Little Ararat—the rib on the flank of the greater mountain from which the smaller proceeds. So sharp are the lines of the

[1] Temperature 10.15 A.M., 72° Fahrenheit.

Little Ararat, so clean the upward slope, that the summit, when seen from this pass or saddle, seems to rise as high in the heaven above us as the dome of Great Ararat itself. The burnt grass struggles towards the little birch covert, but scarcely touches the higher seams. The mountain side is broken into a loose rubble; deep gullies sear it in perpendicular furrows, which contribute to the impression of height. The prevailing colour of the stones is a bleached yellow verging upon a delicate pink; but these paler strata are divided by veins of bluish andesite pointing upwards, like spear-heads, from the base (Fig. 33).

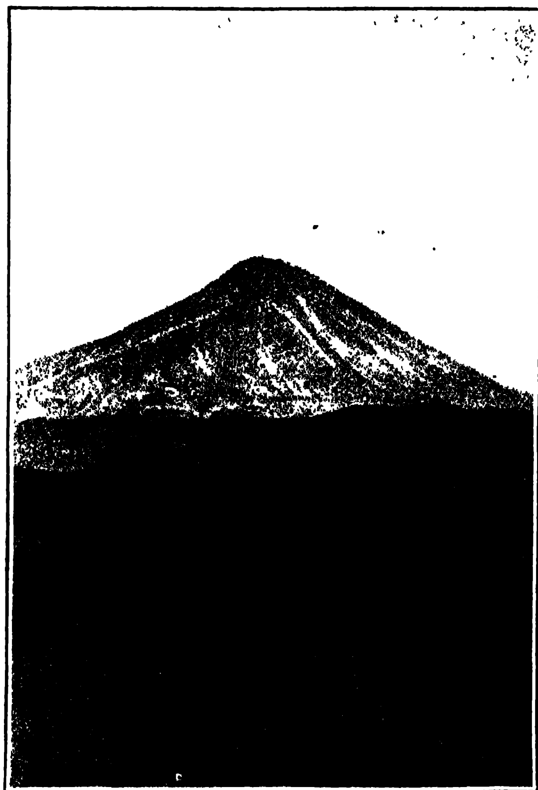


FIG. 33. LITTLE ARARAT FROM NEAR SARDAR BULAKH.

Very different, on the side of Great Ararat, are the shapes which meet the eye. We are facing the south-eastern slope of the mountain, the slope which follows the direction of its axis, the short side or gable of the dome. In the descending train of the giant volcano this valley is but an incidental or lesser feature; yet it marks, and in a sense determines, an important alteration in the disposition of the surface forms. It is here that the streams of molten matter descending the mountain side have been arrested and deflected from their original direction, to fall over the massive base. The dam or obstacle which has produced this deviation is the sharp, harmonious figure of the lesser Ararat, emerging from the sea of piled-up boulders, and cleaving the

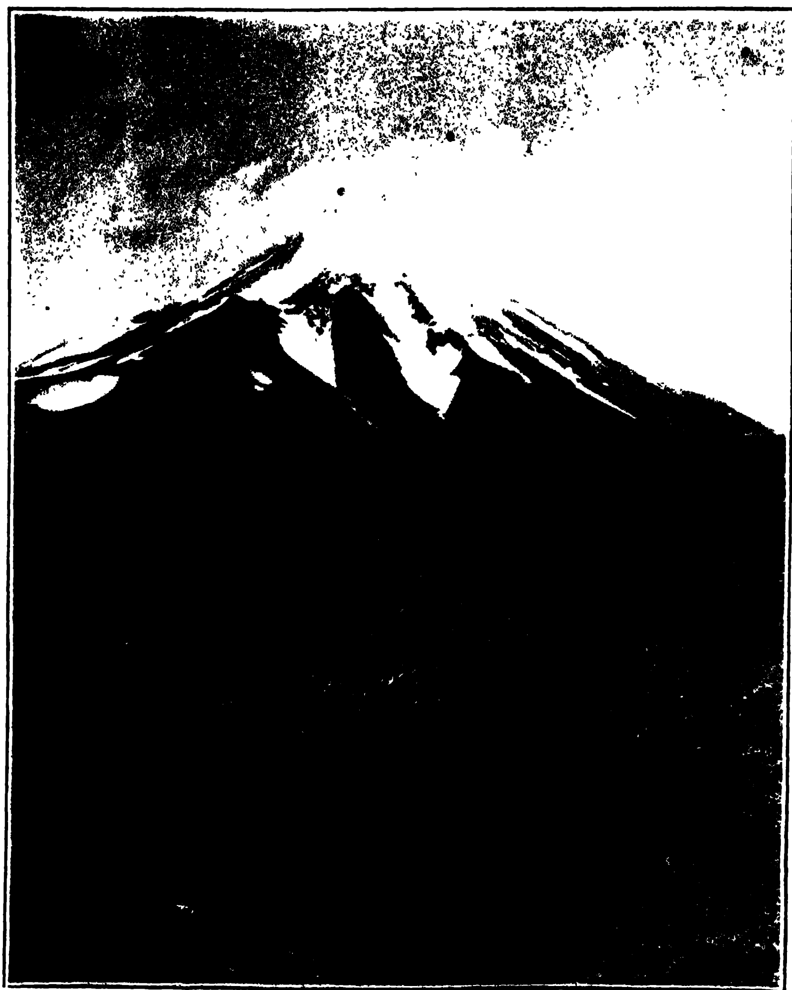


Fig. 34. Great Ararat from above Sardar-Bulakh

chaos of troughs and ridges like the lofty prow of a ship. The course of these streams of lava is signalised by these causeways of agglomerate rocks; you may follow from a point of vantage upon the mountain the numerous branches into which they have divided to several parent or larger streams. On this side of Ararat they have been turned in an oblique direction, from south-east towards north-east; they skirt the western margin of the little valley, curving outwards to the river and the plain. It is just beneath the first of these walls of loose boulders that our two little tents are pitched; beyond it you see another, and yet another still higher, and above them the dome of snow.

The distance from this valley of the summit of Great Ararat, if we measure upon the survey of the Russian Government along a horizontal line, is rather over 5 miles. The confused sea of boulders, of which I have just described the nature, extends, according to my own measurements, to a height of about 12,000 feet. Above that zone, so arduous to traverse, lies the summit region of the mountain, robed in perpetual snow. From whatever point you regard that summit on this south-eastern side, the appearance of its height falls short of reality in a most substantial degree. Not only does the curve of the upward slope lend itself to a most deceitful foreshortening when you follow it from below, but, indeed, the highest point or crown of the dome is invisible from this the gable side.

If you strike a direct course from the encampment towards the roof of snow, and, crossing the grain of successive walls and depressions, emerge upon some higher ridge, the numerous ramifications of the lava system may be followed to their source, and are seen to issue from larger causeways which rise in bold relief from the snows of the summit region, and open fanwise down the higher slopes (Fig. 34). In shape these causeways may be said to resemble the sharp side of a wedge; the massive base from which the bank rises narrows to a pointed spine. As the eye pursues the circle of the summit where it vanishes towards the north, these ribs of rock which radiate down the mountain diminish in volume and relief. Their sharp edges commence to cut the snowy canopy about 3000 feet below the dome. It is rather on this south-eastern side of Ararat, the side which follows the direction of the axis of the fabric—the line upon which the forces have acted by which the whole fabric has been reared—that a formation so characteristic of the surface of the summit

region at once attains its greatest development, and is productive of a phenomenon which cannot fail to arrest the eye. At a height of about 14,000 feet, a causeway of truly gigantic proportions breaks abruptly from the snow. The head of the ridge is bold and lofty, and towers high above the snow-slope with steep and rocky sides. The ridge itself is in form a wedge or triangle, cut deep down into the side of the mountain, and marked along the spine by a canal-shaped depression which accentuates the descending curve (see Fig. 34). The troughs and ridges, which you will now be crossing, have their origin in this parent ridge; you see it bending outwards, away from Little Ararat, and dividing into branches and systems of branches as it reaches the lower slopes. Whether its want of connection with the roof of Ararat, or the inherent characteristics of its uppermost end, be sufficient evidence to justify the supposition of Abich that this ridge at its head marks a separate eruptive centre on the flank of Ararat, I am not competent adequately to discuss. I can only observe that it is not difficult to find another explanation. It is possible that the ridge where it narrows to the summit has been fractured and swept away. This peak, or sharp end of the causeway, to whatever causes its origin may be ascribed, is a distinguishing feature on the slope of Ararat, seen far and wide like a tooth or hump or shoulder on this the south-eastern side.[1]

Although the most direct way to the summit region leads immediately across the zone of boulders from the camp by the sirdar's pool, yet it is not that which most travellers have followed, or which the natives of the district recommend. This line of approach, which I followed for some distance a few days after our ascent, is open to the objection that it is no doubt more difficult to scale the slope of snow upon this side. The tract of uncovered rocks which breaks the snow-fields, offering ladders to the roof of the dome, is situated further to the south-east of the mountain, above the neck of the valley of the pool. Whether it would not be more easy to reach these ladders by skirting slantwise from the higher slopes, is a question which is not in itself unreasonable, and which only actual experience will decide. It was in this manner, I believe, that the English traveller, my friend the Rt. Hon. James Bryce, made an ascent which, as a feat, is, I think, the most remarkable of any of the recorded climbs. Starting from the pool at one o'clock in the

[1] It is alluded to by some travellers under the name of Tash Kilisa.



Fig. 35 Our Kurd Porters on Ararat.

morning, he reached the summit, alone, at about two in the afternoon, accomplishing within a space of about six hours the last 5000 feet, and returning to the point from which he started before sunrise on the following day. We ourselves were advised to follow up the valley, keeping the causeways upon our right, and only then, when we should have reached a point about south-east of the summit, to strike across the belt of rock.

At twenty minutes before two on the 18th of September our little party left camp in marching order, all in the pride of health and spirits, and eager for the attack. Thin wreaths of cloud wrapped the snows of the summit—the jealous spell which baffles the bold lover even when he already grasps his prize. We had taken leave of the Cossack officers and their band of light-hearted men. Our friends were returning to Akhury and Aralykh, the one body to hunt the Kurds of the frontier, the other to languish in dull inactivity until their turn should come round again. Four Cossacks were deputed to remain and guard our camp; we ourselves had decided to dispense with any escort and to trust to our Kurdish allies. Of these, ten sturdy fellows accompanied us as porters to carry our effects, their rifles slung over their many-coloured tatters beside the burden allotted to each (Fig. 35). With my cousin and myself were the young Swiss, Rudolph Taugwalder, a worthy example of his race and profession—the large limbs, the rosy cheeks, the open mien without guile—and young Ernest Wesson, fresh from the Polytechnic in London, burning to distinguish himself. My Armenian dragoman followed as best he was able until the camp at the snow was reached; his plump little figure was not well adapted to toil over the giant rocks. Of our number was also an Armenian from Akhury, who had tendered his services as guide; he was able to indicate a place for our night's encampment, but he did not venture upon the slope of snow.

A little stream trickles down the valley, but sinks exhausted at this season before reaching the sirdar's well. In the early summer it is of the volume of a torrent, which winds past the encampment, like a serpent of silver, uttering a dull, rumbling sound.[1] It is fed by the water from the snow-fields, and there is said to be a spring which contributes to support it at a height of nearly 11,000 feet.[2] After half an hour's walk over the stony sur-

[1] Madame B. Chantre, *À travers l'Arménie Russe*, Paris, 1893, p. 219.

[2] Markoff, *Ascension du Grand Ararat*, in *Bulletin de la Soc. Roy. Belge de Géographie*, Brussels, 1888, p. 579.

face of the platform—the ragged herbage burnt yellow by the sun—we entered the narrows of the mountain saddle, and followed the dry bed of this rivulet at the foot of rocky spurs. The tufts of sappy grass sparsely studded on the margin of the water-course gave place, as we advanced, to a continuous carpet of soft and verdant turf; here and there the eye rested on the deep green of the juniper, or the graceful fretwork of a wild rose tree quivered in the draught. The warm rays flashed in the thin atmosphere, and tempered the searching breeze. The spurs on our right descend from the shoulder of Great Ararat, from the causeway of which it forms the head, and are seen to diverge into two systems as they enter the narrow pass. The one group pushes forward to the Little Ararat and is lost in confused detail; the other and, perhaps, the larger system bends boldly along the side of the valley, sweeping outwards towards the base. At three o'clock we reached a large pool of clouded water, collected on a table surface of burnt grass; close by is an extensive bed of nettles, and a circle of loose stones. This spot is, no doubt, the site of a Kurdish encampment, and appeared to have been only recently abandoned by the shepherds and their flocks. The further we progressed, the more the prospect opened over the slopes of Ararat; we were approaching the level of the tops of the ridges which skirt the valley side. Passing, as we now were, between the two Ararats, we again remarked that the greater seemed no higher than the lesser, so completely is the eye deceived. In the hollows of the gully there were small pools of water, but the stream itself was dry.

By half-past three we had left the gentle water-course, and were winding inwards, up the slope of Great Ararat, to cross the black and barren region, the girdle of sharp crags and slippery boulders which is drawn round the upper seams of the mountain, like a succession of *chevaux de frise*. We thought it must have been on some other side of Ararat that the animals descended from the Ark. For a space of more than three hours we laboured on over a chaos of rocks, through a labyrinth of troughs and ridges, picking a path and as often retracing it, or scrambling up the polished sides of the larger blocks which arrest the most crafty approach. The Kurds, although sorely taxed by their burdens, were at an advantage compared to ourselves; they could slip, like cats, from ledge to ledge in their laced slippers of hide. In one place we passed a gigantic heap of boulders, towering several

hundred feet above our heads. The rock is throughout of the same character and colour—an andesitic lava of a dark slaty hue. A little later we threaded up a ravine or gully, and, after keeping for awhile to the bottom of the depression, climbed slowly along the back of the ridge. I noticed that the grain or direction of the formation lay towards east-south-east. From the head of this ravine we turned into a second, by a natural gap or pass; loose rocks were piled along the sides of the hollow, which bristled with fantastic, but unreal, shapes. Here a seated group of camels seemed to munch in silence on the line of fading sky, or the knotty forms of lifeless willows stretched a menace of uplifted arms. In the sheltered laps of this higher region, as we approached our journey's end, the snow still lay in ragged patches, which increased in volume and depth. . . . The surface cleared, the view opened; we emerged from the troubled sea of stone. Beyond a lake of snow and a stretch of rubble rose the ghostly sheet of the summit region, holding the last glimmer of day.

It was seven o'clock, and we had no sooner halted than the biting frost numbed our limbs.[1] The ground about us was not uneven, but an endless crop of pebbles filled the plainer spaces between little capes of embedded rock. At length upon the margin of the snow-lake we found a tiny tongue of turf-grown soil—just sufficient emplacement to hold the flying tent which we had brought for the purpose of this lofty bivouac near the line of continuous snow. We were five to share the modest area which the sloping canvas enclosed; yet the temperature in the tent sank below freezing before the night was done. Down the slope beside us the snow water trickled beneath a thin covering of ice. The sheep-skin coats which we had brought from Aralykh protected us from chill, but the hardy Kurds slept in their seamy tatters upon the naked rocks around. One among them sought protection as the cold became intenser, and we wrapped him in a warm cape. It was the first time I had passed the night at so great an elevation—12,194 feet above the sea—and it is possible that the unwonted rarity of the atmosphere contributed to keep us awake. But, whether it may have arisen from the conditions which surrounded us, or from a nervous state of physical excitement inspired by our enterprise, not one among us, excepting the dragoman, succeeded in courting sleep. That plump little person

[1] Temperature at 8 P.M., 18° F., and next morning at 5.45 A.M., 28° F.

had struggled on bravely to this his furthest goal, and his heavy breathing fell upon the silence of the calm, transparent night.

The site of our camp below the snow-line marks a new stage, or structural division, in the fabric of Ararat. Of these divisions, which differ from one another not only in the characteristics presented by each among them, but also in the gradient of slope, it is natural to distinguish three. We are dealing in particular with that section of the mountain which lies between Aralykh and the summit, and with the features of the south-eastern side. First, there is the massive base of the mountain, about 10 miles in depth, extending from the floor of the river valley to a height of about 6000 feet. At that point the higher seams commence to gather, and the belt of rock begins. The arduous tracts which we had just traversed, where large, loose blocks of hard, black lava are piled up like a beach, compose the upper portion of this middle region, and may be said to touch the lower margin of the continuous fields of snow. The line of contact between the extremities of the one and the other stage partakes of the nature of a transitional system, a neutral zone on the mountain side, where the rocky layers of the middle slopes have not yet shelved away, nor the immediate seams of the summit region settled to their long climb. In this sense the fields of stone about our encampment, with their patches of last year's snow, are invested with the attributes of a natural threshold at the foot of the great dome. The stage which is highest in the structure of Ararat, the stage which holds the dome, has its origin in this threshold, or neutral district, at an altitude which varies between 12,000 and 13,000 feet.

Very different in character and in appearance from the region we were leaving behind was the slope which faced our encampment, robed in perpetual snow. You have pursued the ramifications of the lava system to the side of their parent stems; and in place of blind troughs and prospectless ledges a noble singleness of feature breaks upon the extricated view. You command the whole summit structure of Ararat on the short, or gable side; and the shape which rises from the open ground about you is that of a massive cone. The regular seams which mount to the summit stretch continuous to the crown of snow, and are inclined at an angle which diverges very little from an average of 30°. The gradients from which these higher seams gather—the slopes about our camp—cannot exceed half that inclination, or an angle

of 15°. Such is the outline, so harmonious and simple, which a first glance reveals. . . . A more intimate study of the summit region, as it expands to a closer view, disclosed characteristics which were not exactly similar to those with which we had already become familiar in the neighbourhood of Sardar Bulakh. It was there the north-eastern hemisphere of the mountain—if the term may be applied to the oval figure which the summit region presents—displayed to the prospect upon the segment between east and south-east. Our present position lay more to the southward, between the two hemispheres; we were placed near the axis of the figure, and the roof, as viewed from our encampment, bore nearly due north-west. The gigantic causeway which at Sardar Bulakh was seen descending on our left hand from the distant snows, now rose on our right, like a rocky headland, confronting a gleaming sea of ice. But, when the eye pursues the summit circle vanishing towards the west, you miss the sister forms of lesser causeways, radiating down the mountain side. It is true that the greater proximity of our standpoint to the foot of these highest slopes curtailed the segment of the circle which we are able to command. This circumstance is not in itself sufficient to explain the change in the physiognomy of the summit region, as we see it on this side. In place of those bold, black ribs or ridges, spread fanwise down the incline, furrowing the snows with their sharp edges, and lined along the troughs of their contiguous bases with broad streaks of sheltered nevé, it seems as if the fabric had fallen asunder, the surface slipped away—all the flank of the mountain depressed and hollow, from our camp to the roof of the dome. The canopy of snow which encircles the summit—a broad, inviolate bank, unbroken by any rift or rock projection for a depth of some 2000 feet—breaks sharply off on the verge of this depression, and leaves the shallow cavity bare. From the base of the giant causeway just above us to the gently-pursing outline of the roof you follow the edge of the great snow-field, bordering a rough and crumbling region which offers scanty foothold to the snow, where the hollow slope bristles with pointed boulders, and the bold crags pierce the ruin around them in upstanding combs or saw-shaped ridges, holding slantwise to the mountain side. On the west side of this broad and uncovered depression, near the western extremity of the cone, a long strip of snow descends from the summit, caught by some trough, or sheltering fissure, in the rough face of the cliff.

Beyond it, just upon the sky-line, the bare rocks reappear, and climb the slope, like a natural ladder, to a point where the roof of the dome is lowest and appears to offer the readiest access to the still invisible crown.[1]

In the attenuated atmosphere surrounding the summit every foot that is gained tells. An approach which promises to ease the gradient at the time when it presses most seems to offer advantages which some future traveller may be encouraged to essay. We ourselves were influenced in the choice of a principle upon which to base our attack by the confident counsels of the Armenian, which the local knowledge of the Kurds confirmed. We were advised to keep to the eastern margin of the depression, by the edge of the great snow-field. You see the brown rocks still baffling the snow-drifts near the point where the deceitful slope appears to end, where on the verge of the roof it just dips a little, then stands up, like a low white wall, on the luminous ground of blue.

The troubled sea of boulders flowing towards the Little Ararat, from which we had just emerged, still hemmed us in from any prospect over the tracts which lay below. The flush of dawn broke between the two mountains from a narrow vista of sky. The even surface of the snow slope loomed white and cold above our heads, while the night still lingered on the dark stone about us, shadowing the little laps of ice. Before six o'clock we were afoot and ready; it wanted a few minutes to the hour as we set out from our camp. To the Swiss was entrusted the post of leader; behind him followed in varying order my cousin and Wesson and myself. Slowly we passed from the shore of the snow-lake to the gathering of the higher seams, harbouring our strength for the steeper gradients as we made across the beach of boulders, stepping firmly from block to block.

The broad, white sheet of the summit circle descends to the snow-lakes of the lower region in a tongue, or gulf of deep nevé; you may follow on the margin of the great depression the western edge of this gleaming surface unbroken down the side of the cone. On the east the black wall of the giant causeway borders the shining slope, invading the field of perpetual winter to a height of over 14,000 feet. The width of the snow-field between these limits varies as it descends; on a level with the shoulder, or

[1] See the photograph of the summit region (Fig. 36, p. 180), which clearly shows these various features.

head of the causeway, it appeared to span an interval of nearly 200 yards.[1] The depth of the bed must be considerable, and, while the surface holds the tread in places, it as often gives and lets you through. No rock-projection, or gap, or fissure breaks the slope of the white fairway; but the winds have raised the crust about the centre into a ribbon of tiny waves. Our plan was to cross the stony region about us, slanting a little east, and to mount by the rocks on the western margin of the snow-field, adhering as closely as might be possible to the side of the snow. It was in the execution of this plan—so simple in its conception—that the trained instinct of the Swiss availed. Of those who have attempted the ascent of Ararat—and their number is not large—so many have failed to reach the summit that, upon a mountain which makes few, if any, demands upon the resources of the climber's craft, their discomfiture must be attributed to other reasons: to the peculiar nature of the ground traversed, no less than to the inordinate duration of the effort; to the wearisome recurrence of the same kind of obstacles, and to the rarity of the air. Now the disposition of the rocks upon the surface of the depression is by no means the same as that which we have studied in connection with the seams which lie below. The path no longer struggles across a troubled sea of ridges, or strays within the blind recesses of a succession of gigantic waves of stone. On the other hand, the gradients are as a rule steeper; and the clearings are covered with a loose rubble, which slips from under the feet. The boulders are piled one upon another in heaps as they happened to fall, and the sequence of forms is throughout arbitrary and subject to no fixed law. In one place it is a tower of this loose masonry which blocks all further approach; in another a solid barrier of sharp crags, laced together, which it is necessary to circumvent. When the limbs have been stiffened and the patience exhausted by the long and devious escalade, the tax upon the lungs is at its highest, and the strain upon the heart most severe. Many of the difficulties which travellers have encountered upon this stage of the climb may be avoided, or met at a greater advantage, by adhering to the edge of the snow. But the fulfilment of this purpose is by no means so easy as might at first sight appear. You are always winding inwards to

[1] Yet it looks a mere streak in the illustration (Fig. 36). The lower end of the snow slope was not well seen from the standpoint of that photograph. Actually it resembles a magnificent river.

avoid the heaps of boulders, or emerging on the backs of gigantic blocks of lava towards the margin of the shining slope. In the choice of the most direct path, where many offered, the Swiss was never at fault; he made up the cone without a moment's hesitation, like a hound threading a close covert, and seldom if ever foiled.

At twenty minutes to seven, when the summit of Little Ararat was about on a level with the eye, we paused for awhile and turned towards the prospect, now opening to a wider range. The day was clear, and promised warmth; above us the snowy dome of Ararat shone in a cloudless sky. The landscape on either side of the beautiful pyramid lay outspread at our feet; from north-east, the hidden shores of Lake Sevan, to where the invisible seas of Van and Urmi diffused a soft veil of opaline vapour over the long succession of lonely ranges in the south-east and south. The wild borderland of Persia and Turkey here for the first time expands to view. The scene, however much it may belie the conception at a first and hasty glance, bears the familiar imprint of the characteristics peculiar to the great tableland. The mountains reveal their essential nature and disclose the familiar forms—the surface of the tableland broken into long furrows, of which the ridges tend to hummock shapes. So lofty is the stage, so aloof this mighty fabric from all surrounding forms, the world lies dim and featureless about it like the setting of a dream. In the foreground are the valleys on the south of Little Ararat, circling round to the Araxes floor; and, on the north-east, beside the thread of the looping river, is a little lake, dropped like a turquoise on the sand where the mountain sweeps the plain.

In the space of another hour we had reached an elevation about equal to that of the head of the causeway on the opposite side of the snow, a point which I think we should be justified in fixing at over 14,000 feet.[1] We were now no longer threading along the shore of an inlet; alone the vague horizon of the summit circle was the limit of the broad, white sea. But on our left hand the snowless region of rock and rubble still accompanied our course, and a group of red crags stood up above our heads, just where the upward slope appeared to end.

Yet another two hours of continuous climbing, and, at about

[1] Abich (*Geologische Forschungen in den kaukasischen Ländern*, Vienna, 1882, part ii. p. 455) ascribes to it an elevation of 14,600 feet.

half-past nine, the loose boulders about us open, and we are approaching the foot of these crags. The end seems near; but the slope is deceitful, and when once we have reached the head of the formation the long white way resumes. But the blue vault about us streams with sunlight; the snow is melting in the crannies; a genial spirit lightens our toil.

And now, without any sign or warning, the mysterious spell which holds the mountain begins to throw a web about us, craftily, from below. The spirits of the air come sailing through the azure with shining gossamer wings, while the heavier vapours gather around us from dense banks serried upon the slope beneath us, a thousand feet lower down.

The rocks still climb the increasing gradient, but the snow is closing in. At eleven we halt to copy an inscription, which has been neatly written in Russian characters on the face of a boulder stone. It records that on the third day of the eighth month of 1893 the expedition led by the Russian traveller Postukhoff passed the night in this place. At the foot of the stone lie several objects: a bottle filled with fluid, an empty tin of biscuits, a tin containing specimens of rock.

At half-past eleven I take the angle of the snow slope, at this point 35°. About this time the Swiss thinks it prudent to link us all together with his rope. The surface of the rocks is still uncovered, but their bases are embedded in deep snow.

It is now, after six hours' arduous climbing, that the strain of the effort tells. The lungs are working at the extreme of their capacity, and the pressure upon the heart is severe. At noon I call a halt, and release young Wesson from his place in the file of four. His pluck is still strong, but his look and gait alarm me, and I persuade him to desist. We leave him to rest in a sheltered place, and there await our return. From this time on we all three suffer, even the Swiss himself. My cousin is affected with mountain sickness; as for me, I find it almost impossible to breathe and climb at the same time. We make a few steps upwards and then pause breathless, and gasp again and again. The white slope vanishing above us must end in the crown of the dome; and the boulders strewn more sparsely before us promise a fairer way. But the further we go, the goal seems little closer; and the shallow snow, resting on a crumbling rubble, makes us lose one step in every three. A strong smell of sulphur permeates the atmosphere; it proceeds from the sliding

surface upon which we are treading, a detritus of pale sulphurous stones.

At 1.25 we see a plate of white metal, affixed to a cranny in the rocks. It bears an inscription in Russian character which dates from 1888. I neglect to copy out the unfamiliar letters; but there can be little doubt that they record the successful ascent of Dr. Markoff, an ascent which cost him dear.

A few minutes later, at half-past one, the slope at last eases, the ground flattens, the struggling rocks sink beneath the surface of a continuous field of snow. At last we stand upon the summit of Ararat—but the sun no longer pierces the white vapour; a fierce gale drives across the forbidden region, and whips the eye straining to distinguish the limits of snow and cloud. Vague forms hurry past on the wings of the whirlwind; in place of the landscape of the land of promise we search dense banks of fog.

Disappointed perhaps, but relieved of the gradient, and elated with the success of our climb, we run in the teeth of the wind across the platform, our feet scarcely sinking in the storm-swept crust of the surface, the gently undulating roof of the dome. . . . Along the edge of a spacious snow-field which dips towards the centre, and is longest from north-west to south-east, on the vaulted rim of the saucer which the surface resembles, four separate elevations may conveniently be distinguished as the highest points in the irregular oval figure which the whole platform appears to present. The highest among these rounded elevations bears north-west from the spot where we first touch the summit or emerge upon the roof. That spot itself marks another of these inequalities; the remaining two are situated respectively in this manner—the one about midway between the two already mentioned, but nearer to the first and on the north side; the other about south of the north-western elevation, and this seems the lowest of all. The difference in height between the north-western elevation and that upon the south-east is about 200 feet; and the length of the figure between these points—we paced only a certain portion of the distance—is about 500 yards. The width of the platform, so far as we could gauge it, may be some 300 yards. A single object testifies to the efforts of our fore-runners and to the insatiable enterprise of man—a stout stake embedded upon the north-western elevation in a little pyramid of stones. It is here that we take our observations, and make our

longest halt.[1] Before us lies a valley or deep depression, and on the further side rises the north-western summit, a symmetrical cone of snow. This summit connects with the bold snow buttresses beyond it, terraced upon the north-western slope. The distance down and up from where we stand to that summit may be about 400 yards; but neither the Swiss nor ourselves consider it higher, and we are prevented from still further exploring the summit region by the increasing violence of the gale and by the gathering gloom of cloud. The sides and floor of the saddle between the two summits are completely covered with snow, and we see no trace of the lateral fissure which Abich, no doubt under different circumstances, was able to observe.

We remain forty minutes upon the summit; but the dense veil never lifts from the platform, nor does the blast cease to pierce us through. No sooner does an opening in the driving vapours reveal a vista of the world below than fresh levies fly to the unguarded interval, and the wild onset resumes. Yet what if the spell had lost its power, and the mountain and the world lain bare? had the tissue of the air beamed clear as crystal, and the forms of earth and sea, embroidered beneath us, shone like the tracery of a shield?

We should have gained a balloon view over Nature. Should we catch her voice so well? —the ancient voice heard at cool of day in the garden, or the voice that spoke in accents of thunder to a world condemned to die. "It repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart. The earth was filled with violence: God looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt. In the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

We are standing on the spot where the ark of gopher rested, where first the patriarch alighted on the face of an earth renewed. Before him lie the valleys of six hundred years of sorrow; the airiest pinnacle supports him, a boundless hope fills his eyes. The pulse of life beats strong and fresh around him; the busy swarms thrill with sweet freedom, elect of all living things. In

[1] The temperature of the air a few feet below the summit out of the gale was 20° F. The height of the north-western elevation of the south-eastern summit of Ararat is given by my Hicks mountain aneroid as 17,493 feet. The reading is no doubt too high by several hundred feet. The Carey aneroid gives a still higher figure, and the Boylean-Mariotti mercurial barometer entirely refused to work.

the settling exhalations stands the bow of many colours, eternal token of God's covenant with man.

The peaks which rise on the distant borderland where silence has first faltered into speech are wrapped about with the wreaths of fancy, a palpable world of cloud. Do we fix our foot upon these solid landmarks to wish the vague away, to see the hard summits stark and naked, and all the floating realm of mystery flown? The truth is firm, and it is well to touch and feel it and know where the legend begins; but the legend itself is truth transfigured, as the snow distils into cloud. The reality of life speaks in every syllable of that solemn, stately tale—divine hope bursting the bounds of matter to compromise with despair. And the ancient mountain summons the spirits about him, and veils a futile frown, as the rising sun illumines the valleys of Asia and the life of man lies bare. The spectres walk in naked daylight—Violence and Corruption and Decay. The traveller finds in majestic Nature consolation for these sordid scenes; while a spirit seems to whisper in his ears, "Turn from him!—turn from him, that he may rest till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day."

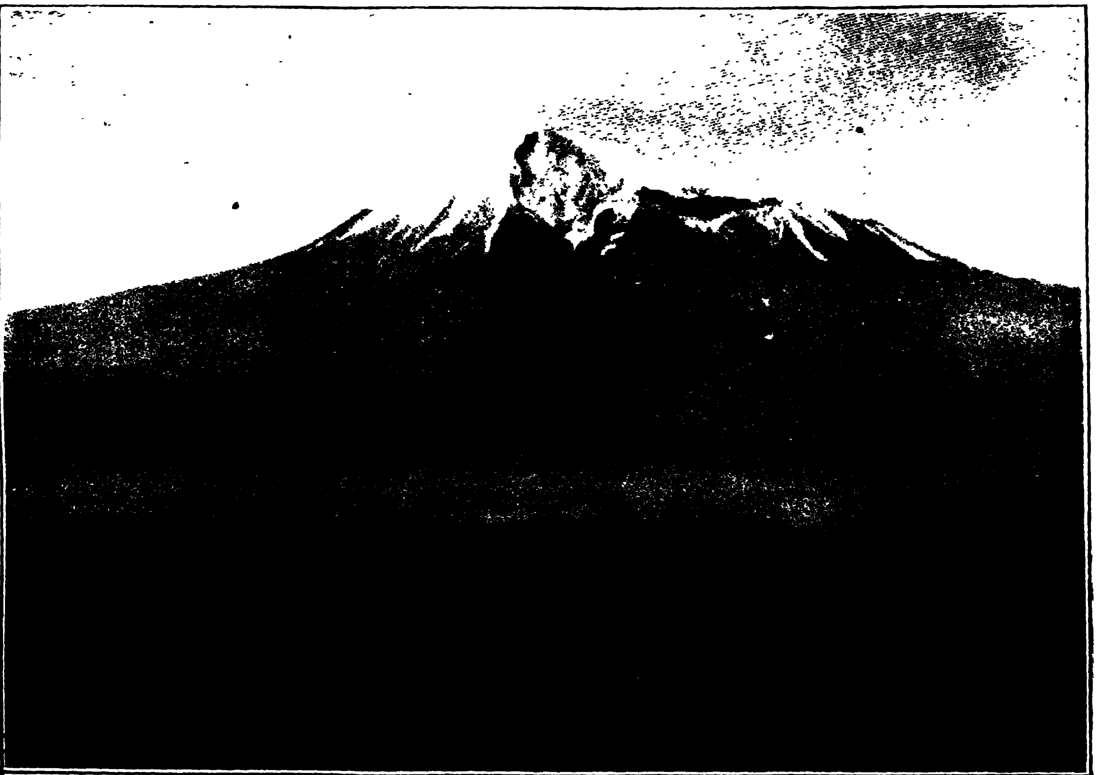


FIG   THE GR   C   ROM ARALYKH

CHAPTER XIII

THE HEART OF ARARAT

RETRACING our steps down the side of the cone, we soon regained the streaming sunlight. I called a halt, and we rested on some rocks, embedded in snow. Our next task was to search for Wesson; but he had left his sheltered cranny, and, as the day was warm, we concluded that he had returned to camp. The Swiss and myself determined to try a glissade down the snow slope; my cousin preferred to adhere to the rocks. I was aware of the danger of the glissade down Ararat, and we therefore planned our course with care. We broke the descent at several points, made errors on the side of caution, and glided safely into one of the inlets about the base of the cone. It was still some distance to the encampment; we proceeded with the utmost leisure across the boulder-strewn waste. At last we beheld the lake of snow, and our tiny tent beside it, and the gaunt figures of the Kurds. These also perceived us, and sent us a cry of greeting, which vibrated in the still air. Wesson and the dragoman were there to meet us; my cousin arrived almost at the same time. Our climb had been accomplished without a single mishap, and all except the dragoman, who pleaded that he had been half frozen in camp, were pleased with the day's work. It was twenty minutes past six o'clock; yet I thought it best to strike our tent and seek a less exposed and less elevated spot. After a toilsome walk of about half an hour we found some grass in a little valley, and there composed ourselves for the night.

I had sent two Kurds to collect firewood while we were sleeping; it was morning before they returned. We breakfasted beside a pleasant fire, and decided to devote the earlier hours to rest. I was able to avail myself of a convenient physical habit of being refreshed by violent exercise. The summit was clear of

cloud, and I sallied forth with the camera tq seek a standpoint in full view of the cone. At some little distance from our camp I found such an eminence, whence all the characteristics of the summit region were exposed (Fig. 36). The peak of Great Ararat bore almost due north-west of this point, that of Little Ararat a little south of east.[1] On the left of the picture you see the hollow in the face of the cone and the rocks struggling



FIG. 36. SUMMIT OF ARARAT FROM THE SOUTH-EAST, TAKEN AT A HEIGHT OF ABOUT 13,000 FEET.

upwards to its top; on the right is the shoulder, or head of the causeway, bordering the snow slope on the opposite side. In the afternoon we regained our standing encampment in the valley of Sardar Bulākh.

Relieved of the tension of a fixed purpose, we were able to turn with real enjoyment to the contemplation of the surroundings in which we were placed. There can scarcely exist in the world another such standpoint as the platform of the sirdar's well. You never tire of the contrasting shapes of the massive dome and the graceful pyramid; below you in the plains the silent operations of Nature proceed on their daily course.

[1] The readings on the prismatic compass were 310° and 105° respectively.

Morning breaks, and the floor of the plain is shrouded in white mist; the sun rises, and the opposite peaks of the Sevan ranges are crowned with banks of billowing cloud. Stray films wander out into the blue vault of heaven, and graze the sides of the dome. As the day grows, the warm air mounts these sides and melts the snows, which distil into a white vaporous mass. The ground of the landscape increases in definition of feature—the rich campagna, the looping river, the sites of the towns. It is the subtle quality no less than the scale of the composition which distinguishes this prospect from other views, similar in character, which are unfolded from the summit of a pass. And if you turn from the immense expanse and rest the eye on the forms about you, those forms respond to your emotions and invest them with a deeply religious cast. This vast fabric, so harmonious in design, in position so self-sufficient, touches chords in the nature of man which sound through all the religions, and die away only when they die. Yet how vulgar appear their dogmas in this pure atmosphere of religion, in the courts of this great cathedral of the natural world! You feel that this mountain has been the parent of religions, whence they strayed into devious paths. To this parent you would again collect the distracted; in this atmosphere you long to bathe the populations of our great towns. Our morbid dramatists, our nervous novelists need the inspiration of these surroundings—the promptings of Nature in her loftiest manifestations, from which the life of man can never with impunity be divorced.

In a lighter sense, to the traveller who seeks rest and enjoyment, I can confidently recommend a pilgrimage to this beautiful upland valley, and a sojourn among the marvels of this site. For the sportsman there are partridges in abundance; the botanist and the man of taste will admire the brilliancy of the flowers which nestle in the crannies of the rocks. Junipers clothe the ground, and a plant with spiked foliage like the juniper, and with a lovely little flower like a star. I have taken a specimen to Kew, and they call it *Acantholimon echinus*—a peculiarly appropriate name. Tiny bushes of wild rose flutter in the breezes; and, a little lower down, the earth is yellow with immortelles (*Helichrysum*), which, as I write, recall the southern sun. The journey to Erivan, by way of Tiflis, can be performed in luxury; from Erivan you can drive in a victoria to the foot of Ararat; on the mountain you have need of nothing but a tent

and a cook. The Kurds are well-behaved, and will provide you with milk and mutton, of which it is a treat to taste. The old lawless times are passing into legend, thanks to the vigorous rule of the Tsars. The Russian officials abound in real kindness of disposition; and, if you can only succeed in patching a peace with the *system*, you feel that they really wish you well. We returned to Aralykh on the 22nd of September after an absence of nearly six days.

The cantonment of Aralykh faces the jaws of the great chasm which extends from the snowy roof to the base of Ararat, and lays the heart of the mountain bare (Fig. 37). We were anxious to penetrate within these dark recesses, and, after a day's rest, carried our project into effect.

It is a melancholy reflection that nothing is lasting—that *the strength of the earth withers and the strength of the human body, that faith dies and the closest friendships dissolve. In the world of sense Time is all-powerful, and nothing escapes destruction at his hands.*[1] This painful lesson is written with terrible emphasis on the fabric of Ararat, where it fronts the historic river and the historic plains. Another earthquake, and the massive roof may tumble headlong into the abyss which now yawns beneath its cornice of snow. I have already observed that Herrmann Abich was able to remark a lateral fissure between the two highest elevations in the surface of the crown of the dome. He suggests that this fissure may have been caused by the convulsion of 1840, to which the present configuration of the chasm is due.[2] It would therefore appear that Time has already taken a decisive step towards the overthrow of the uppermost portion of the cone. The chasm itself and the subsidence of the flank of the mountain date from an epoch beyond the range of history. Tournefort, who visited Ararat in 1701, presents us with such a vivid picture of the rent side of the giant, that one cannot doubt that the essential features of the chasm existed in his day.[3] The little monastery of St. Jacob, which, prior to the catastrophe

[1] Sophocles, *Œdipus at Colonus*, l. 610 *seq.*

[2] Abich, *Besteigung des Ararat*, in Baer and Helmersen's *Beitrage zur Kenntniss des Russischen Reiches*, St. Petersburg, 1849, vol. xiii. p. 63. He supports this suggestion by the fact that neither Parrot nor Spasky Avtonomoff mentions the existence of such a fissure. But whether you may be able to see any trace of it or not must depend upon the state of the snow.

[3] Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, Paris, 1717, vol. ii. pp. 357 *seq.* See also Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. x. p. 507.

of 1840, stood within the recesses of the gulf, probably occupied the same site when it was first erected in the early Christian times. The reader may not be acquainted with the story of the catastrophe, and may like to learn or to recall it in this place.

Several travellers have presented us with a description of the locality as it existed before those events.[1] Some 10 miles from the banks of the Kara Su, on the base or pedestal of Ararat, at a height of some 5600 feet above the sea, or 2900 feet above the plain,[2] was situated the Armenian village of Akhury or Arguri—the only village, we are informed by Dubois, which had hazarded a position on the side of the mountain,[3] and a place which boasted a remote antiquity. According to Armenian tradition, it was there that Noah built the altar, and offered up the burnt sacrifice, after his departure from the Ark and safe descent of the mountain, with his family and the living creatures of every kind. It was at Akhury or Arguri—a name which is said to signify in the Armenian language *he has planted the vine*[4]—that, according to the same tradition, the patriarch planted his vineyard and drank to excess of its wine. The inhabitants would point to an ancient willow of stunted growth, bent by the action of snow and ice; it stood in an isolated spot above the village, a rare object on a mountain which is almost devoid of trees. They believed that it drew its origin from a plank of the Ark which had taken root; and they would not suffer any damage to be done to the sacred object, or the least of its branches to be taken away. The population amounted to about

[1] I refer my reader to the works of Tournefort (already cited), Parrot (*Reise zum Ararat*, Berlin, 1834), and Dubois de Montpéreux (*Voyage autour du Caucase*, Paris, 1839-45, vol. iii.).

[2] The measurements are my own. Dubois speaks of Akhury as being five leagues distant from the Kara Su.

[3] Parrot says the same thing, *op. cit.* p. 108.

[4] For a discussion of the name see Parrot, *op. cit.* p. 110. Ritter (*Erdkunde*, x. 508) also refers to Brosset (*Bulletin de l'Acad. de Sc. de St. Pétersbourg*, 1841, vol. viii. p. 43), but is in error when he says that Brosset spells it Aghuri. He actually spells it Acorhi, and throws doubt upon the popular derivation of the name. It would appear that the old Armenian name for the place was Akuri or Agguri, and that later Armenian writers turned the word into Ark-uri in order to extract the signification which I have given in the text. I have adopted the spelling of the Russian official map, which practically reproduces the old word. Dr. Belck has made the ingenious suggestion that the Adduri of the Assyrian inscription of Shalmaneser II. (859-824 B.C.)—a name which is applied to the mountains whither Arame, king of Urardhu or Ararat, fled before the armies of the Assyrian monarch—may be represented by the Armenian Akuri or Agguri (*Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft fur Anthropologie*, 1893, p. 71). That the ancient name of a district often survives in that of a town in these countries is proved by the analogy of the town of Van, which bears the name of the kingdom of which it was formerly the capital, the Biaina of the Vannic texts.

1000 souls;[1] the houses numbered some two hundred, and were built of stone with the usual flat roofs. The settlement owed its prosperity, and even its existence, to a stream which then, as now, issued from the jaws of the chasm, fed by the melting ice and snow. It was placed at the open exit from the gorge, where the trough flattens out into the base. The church and the larger portion of the village were on the right bank of the stream; on the left, opposite the church, stood a square-shaped fortress, built of clay after the fashion of the country. A near eminence was crowned by the walls of a spacious palace, which served as a summer residence for the Persian sirdars of Erivan. It was indeed a delightful resort during the heats of summer. A cool draught descended from the snows of the summit region; and the little stream supported considerable vineyards and orchards, so that the traveller, on approaching Akhury, could take refuge from the glare of the plain in quite a little wood of apricot trees. The church—said to have been called *Araxilvank* (Arakelotz Vank?)—was reputed to have been built on the site of Noah's altar. It dated from the eighth or ninth century; and to such a height had the ground about it risen since its foundation, that the two side doors had become embedded in soil up to the crossbeams. Just beyond this pleasant oasis you entered the chasm, and, after proceeding for nearly two miles up its boulder-strewn hollow, you reached the little monastery of St. Jacob, which stood on the edge of a natural terrace a few hundred feet above the bottom of the gulf, immediately overlooking the right bank of the stream. The chasm had at this spot a depth of some 600 to 800 feet,[2] and the elevation of the site of the monastery above sea-level was 6394 feet.[3] Parrot, who established his headquarters in this lonely cloister, has handed down to us a charming illustration of the place, and a pleasant description of the chapel, with its walled enclosure and garden and orchard, the residence, at the time of his visit, of a single monk. Like the church of Akhury, it commemorated a religious event in the story of Ararat. A monk of the name of Jacob, afterwards bishop of Nisibis, reputed to have been a contemporary and relative of St. Gregory, was

[1] Wagner (*op. infra cit.* p. 166) says that at the time of the catastrophe the Armenian inhabitants numbered nearly 1600 souls, besides Kurdish labourers.

[2] Von Behagel (*apud* Parrot, *op. cit.* 2nd part, p. 183) says 1000 feet. I quote Parrot p. 147.

[3] Parrot, *op. cit.* p. 147. Von Behagel (*loc. cit.*) says that it was 3258 Paris feet, or 3472 English feet, above the plain of the Araxes.

seized with the desire to convince the sceptics of the truth of the Biblical narrative, and to assure himself of the presence of the Ark on the summit of Ararat by the evidence of his own eyes. In the pursuit of this purpose he made several attempts to scale the mountain from the north-east side. On each occasion he fell asleep, exhausted by the effort; as often as he awoke, he would find that he had been miraculously transported to the point from which he had set out. At length God looked with compassion upon his fruitless labours, and sent an angel who appeared to him in his sleep. The Divine message was to the effect that the summit was unattainable by mortal man; but the angel deposited on his breast a fragment of the holy Ark, as a reward for his faith and pains.[1] Beyond St. Jacob's, on the same or eastern side of the chasm and on the edge of the precipice, was situated a tiny shrine, built of hewn stone, at an altitude of about 1000 feet above the monastery.[2] It stood by the side of one of the rare springs which are found on Ararat—a well of which the waters are still deemed to possess miraculous powers, and which still attracts numerous pilgrims from the plains. As you followed the gulf still further, the sides increased in steepness and the abyss in depth, until, at a distance of about two and a half miles from the cloister,[3] it ended in an almost perpendicular wall of rock which towered up to the snowy cornice of the dome. Tournefort, whose description is in other respects fantastic, has used language to portray the aspect of the upper end of the chasm which would be true at the present day. He speaks of the terrible appearance of the ravine, one of those natural wonders which testify to the greatness of the Saviour, as his Armenian companion observed. He could not help trembling as he overlooked the precipices, and he asks his readers, if they would form some conception of the character of the phenomenon, to imagine one of the loftiest mountains in the world opening its bosom to a vertical cleft. From the heights above, masses of rock were continually falling into the abyss with a noise that inspired fear.[4]

On the evening of the 20th of June 1840 a terrific earthquake shook the mountain, and not only the shrine and cloister, but the entire village of Akhury with the sirdar's palace were destroyed

[1] Parrot, *op. cit.* p. 135; Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 471. Most travellers tell this story with amplifications and variations. It is to be found in its earliest form in Faustus of Byzantium (book iii. chap. x.).

[2] Parrot, *op. cit.* p. 205.

[3] Von Behagel, *apud* Parrot, *loc. cit*

[4] Tournefort, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 368 *seq.*

and swept away. An eye-witness, who was pasturing cattle on the grassy slopes above the chasm on the side opposite to the shrine and the well, tells us that he was thrown on to his knees by a sudden reeling of the ground, and that, even in this position, he was unable to maintain himself, but was overturned by the continuing shocks. Close by his side the earth cracked; a terrific rolling sound filled his ears; when he dared look up, he could see nothing but a mighty cloud of dust, which glimmered with a reddish hue above the ravine. But the quaking and cracking were renewed; he lay outstretched upon the ground, and thus awaited death. At length the sounds became fainter, and he was able to look towards the ravine. Through the dust he perceived a dark mass in the hollow, but of what it was composed he could not see. The sun went down; the great cloud passed away from the valley; as he descended with his cattle in the failing light, he could see nothing within the abyss except the dark mass. Another spectator has left us an account of the various phases of the phenomenon, as they were experienced from a standpoint below the village. He happened to be working in a garden a few versts from Akhury, on the side of the plain. His wife and daughter were with him; two of his sons appeared towards evening and brought him a report about his cattle. Two riders, returning to the village, exchanged a few words with the party, and rode on. The sun was beginning to sink behind the mountains, and he and his people were preparing to go home. In an instant the ground beneath their feet oscillated violently, and all were thrown down. At the same time loud reports and a rolling sound, as if of thunder, increased the panic into which they fell. A hurricane of wind swept towards them from the chasm and overturned every object that was not firm. In the same direction there arose an immense cloud of dust, overtopped, towards the upper portion of the ravine, by a darker cloud, as of black smoke. After a momentary pause the same phenomena were repeated; only this time a dark mass swept towards them from the direction of the village with a rolling and a rushing sound. It reached the two riders; they were engulfed and disappeared. Immediately afterwards the two sons were overtaken by the same fate. The mass rolled onwards to the gardens, and broke down the walled enclosures. Large stones came tumbling about the unfortunate peasants; and a great crag swept down upon the prostrate witness, and settling by his side, caught his

mantle fast. Extricating himself with difficulty, he succeeded in lifting his unconscious wife and daughter from the earth, and in flying with them over the quaking ground. After each shock they could hear the sound of cracking in the chasm, accompanied by sharp reports. They were joined by fugitives, escaping from the neighbouring gardens, and they endeavoured to make their way to Aralykh. It was morning before they reached their goal; during the night the sounds and shocks continued, always fainter but at periodical intervals. This catastrophe was followed on the 24th of June by a second and scarcely less momentous collapse. On this occasion a mass of mud and water burst from the chasm, as though some colossal dam had given way. Blocks of rock and huge pieces of ice were precipitated over the base, and the flood extended for a space of about thirteen miles. Not a trace was left of the gardens and fields which it devastated, and the Kara Su was temporarily dammed by the viscous stream.[1]

It is to the credit of the times in which we live that no such event could now occur in Russian territory without exhaustive and local scientific investigation, while the results of the catastrophe were still fresh. The task of reporting to the Government was entrusted to a Major of Engineers, who was ordered to open an enquiry on the spot. His account was to the effect that masses of rock were precipitated into the chasm from the overhanging heights; that they were accompanied in their descent by vast quantities of snow, unloosed by the sinking foundations of the uppermost seams. A river of boulders and snow and ice streamed with lightning rapidity down the gulf, buried the cloister and the village with all its inhabitants, and choked up the trough of the abyss. The earthquake was attended by the opening of fissures in the ground, from which there issued water and sand, and even flames.[2] The mention of this last phenomenon appears to have aroused the curiosity of men of learning, and to have excited in them a strong desire for further light. The site was visited in 1843 by a German man of science, Dr. Wagner, and in 1844 by the great geologist Herrmann

[1] The testimony of these witnesses is given by Abich, *Geognostische Reise zum Ararat*, with two drawings of the chasm, in *Monatsberichte der Gesellschaft fur Erdkunde zu Berlin*, series 2, vol. iv. 1846-47. The account is reproduced in his *Geologische Forschungen in den kaukasischen Landern*, Vienna, 1882, part ii. pp. 395 *seq.*, and illustrated by a fine geological view of the chasm in the Atlas, plate vi. It can best be understood in the reprint. See also Wagner, *op. inf. cit.*, and Ritter, *Erdkunde*, x. pp. 507 *seq.*

[2] See the summary of this report in Ritter, *Erdkunde*, x. pp. 509 *seq.*

Abich, whose researches are always careful and complete.[1] These two authorities unfortunately arrived at opposite conclusions as to the character of the convulsion. Wagner begins by discrediting the account of the Russian Major, and suggests that he had never left the walls of Erivan, having lost his travelling money at play. He considers it absurd to suppose that the mass which destroyed Akhury and the fragments of rocks which were projected far and wide can be attributed to the operation of purely seismic forces, dislocating the crown and sides of the abyss. They must have been due to eruptive volcanic action, of which he thought he could see the traces at the upper end of the chasm, the site, according to his view, of one of the old craters of Ararat. They were impelled through the air by steam and escaping gases from a fissure in the bottom of the ravine. We must therefore form the conception of an eruption accompanied by an earthquake, not of a landslip effected by seismic shocks.[2]

That this theory is open to objection on the simple ground of probability, it does not require scientific knowledge to perceive. In the first place an eruption of Ararat is unknown within the historical period; in the second, the destruction of Akhury was only one of many catastrophes which were occasioned by earth movements on the same day. On that same evening the valley of the Araxes was visited by a violent earthquake, and thousands of houses were overthrown.[3] It is true that Wagner supposes an eruption of steam rather than of fire, and favours the hypothesis of vast reservoirs of water beneath the mountain having burst in upon the molten mass below. But this ingenious supposition is rendered unnecessary and improbable by the minute researches of the next trained worker in the same field. Abich asks how it would be possible for eruptive action to have broken forth in a narrow valley—on such a scale that huge crags of 100 to 150 feet in circumference were propelled for a distance of over three miles[4]—without leaving any trace of volcanic ejectamenta on the adjoining heights and on the slopes beyond. A careful examination of the disposition and character of the débris, as they were

[1] See Moriz Wagner (*Reise nach dem Ararat und dem Hochland Armenien*, Stuttgart, 1848, contained in Widermann and Hauff, *Reisen und Landesbeschreibungen*, Lieferung 35), and Abich in *op. cit.*

[2] Consult the argument in Wagner, *op. cit.* pp. 176 *seq.*

[3] See Ritter, *Erdkunde*, x. 510; and for former earthquakes see Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 474; Abich, *Geolog. Forsch.* part ii. pp. 390 *seq.* with map.

[4] "5 versts in a direct line" are Abich's words, *op. cit.* p. 413.

disclosed within the trough of the chasm, as well as on the surface of the base of the mountain, established in his mind the veracity in all essentials of the official version of the Russian Major of Engineers. He observed that the fragments of rock which are strewn over the basal slopes before the entrance to the chasm is reached, become concentrated as you proceed, and are collected into long ridges of boulders, which issue from the mouth of the gulf. Yet not a single one among these fragments was found to be identical in nature with the fragments on the adjacent valley sides. How account for this striking circumstance on the hypothesis of an eruption from fissures along the base of the valley? When he came to investigate the origin of these piled-up boulders, he discovered that they exactly corresponded with the rock of the seams which are found along the upper end of the chasm, overhanging the abyss. He was even able to ascribe approximately the former position of the largest of the crags which recline upon the base to a site on the left wall of the chasm, immediately beneath and supporting the snows. From his writings we may extract the following explanation of the phenomena to which the destruction of Akhury was due. The upper structure of Ararat had been seriously weakened on the north-eastern side by the slow but persistent action of snow and ice, and by the corrosive tendencies of veins of sulphurate of iron. The earthquake precipitated portions of the higher seams into the chasm, together with masses of snow. A dense cloud of dust was induced by the falling rocks, and the setting sun lent to this cloud a lurid hue. Immense quantities of boulders were hurried down the trough of the chasm, accompanied by a stream of mud and melting ice. The course of this composite current was directed upon the village by the configuration of the left wall of the chasm. As the sides of the valley fell in, its upper portion became obstructed at the neck or narrow which still exists about at the point where the little shrine used to overlook the abyss. A mighty dam was formed by the fallen masses, and the head of the valley became a huge morass. Further lapses of rock and snow took place from the summit region, and the heats of June dissolved the frozen elements in the morass. On the 24th the dam yielded to the overpowering pressure, and the second act of the catastrophe was fulfilled.

As a result of this earthquake, the ridge enclosing the uppermost end of the chasm was found to have acquired about double

its former extent. The height of the precipice had also increased considerably, especially on the eastern side. The summit remained intact, but the fabric of Ararat lay henceforth exposed to its innermost core.[1]

We set out at a quarter-past eight in the morning, mounted on little hacks. The Armenian Makar, who had accompanied us on the previous expedition, was deputed to be our guide. It took us some twenty minutes to cross the belt of sand and camelthorn at a pace of about six miles an hour. Then the ground commenced to rise with more perceptible acclivity, and we made our way across the massive base. The still air, and the restfulness of the stately fabric before us exercised upon us their now familiar spell. Grey clouds enveloped the snows of the summit region, collected above a veil of tender mist.

We were pointing towards the entrance to the chasm, and we noticed that, in that direction, there exists a considerable concavity in the surface of the base. One might almost form the conception of a flaw in the mountain, extending to the pedestal upon which it is reared. On either side of us, but more especially on our left hand, the rounded contours of the basal slopes were curving inwards to a wide depression, up the trough of which we rode. Is this feature the result of landslip and of floods issuing from the chasm, or was the pedestal always weaker upon this side? I am inclined to ascribe it in part to an inherent defect in the structure, which has been enlarged and accentuated in the process of centuries. It would appear that the streams of lava which fed the base on the north-west and south-east were not directed in equal volume to these north-eastern slopes. Such a distribution of the molten matter which contributed to build up the fabric would account, at least in some measure, for the subsequent subsidence of Ararat on this its north-eastern flank.

As we proceeded, this hollow formation became more pronounced; we were approaching the mouth of the chasm. We observed how much more copious was the flora which covers this portion of the base. In place of the burnt herbage over which we had ridden on our journey to Sardar Bulakh, we here admired an abundant growth of low and thorny bushes of which the tiny and delicate pink and white flowers were showered upon a ground of grey and green (*Atraphaxis spinosa*). Long streamers of sansola

[1] Ritter, *Erdkunde*, x. pp. 512, 513.

(*Kochia prostrata*, Schrad.) bent towards us, and gigantic yellow grasses rose like spears (*Calamagrostis epigejos*, Roth.). The stream which issues from the chasm—exhausted at this season—feeds and fertilises the sandy soil, and, perhaps, the layers of mud which were left by the flood of 1840 have not been without effect on the nature of the land. We were reminded of that catastrophe by the huge fragments of conglomerate rock which are strewn over the hollow throughout a considerable area. On our return I took a photograph of the largest of these crags, where it lay,

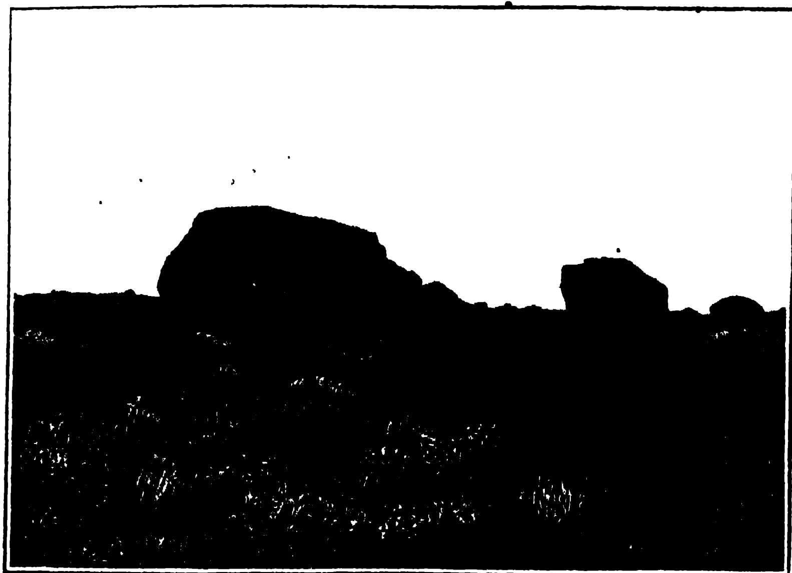


FIG. 38.

among bouquets of spangled atraphaxis, outlined against the sky (Fig. 38). Abich informs us that the fragment which lies immediately in front of it was incorporated with it at the time of his first visit in 1844; the mass then measured at the base 285 feet in circumference, with a height of 45 feet.[1] I have already said that this careful investigator was able to trace its origin to a site at the upper end of the chasm, overhanging the abyss. According to his theory, it must have fallen in after the first act of the catastrophe, and been transported in the course of the second act to its present place. It was pushed down the trough of the ravine and over the gentle incline of these basal slopes by

[1] Abich, *Geolog. Forsch.* part ii. p. 412.

the action of the viscous stream, until that action lost its force when the stream was freed from the compression of the gorge and radiated outwards over the pedestal.[1] To us plain people the position of these crags was a source of amazement, and the Greeks would have made the chasm the residence of a Cyclops who hurled such missiles at adventuresome men.

At half-past ten we halted at a small Kurdish village, situated at the mouth of the chasm. These Kurds have erected hovels of loose stones with roofs of mud, and they can boast or deplore, in the person of a *starshina*, a direct official connection with the Russian Government. It was amusing to see a Kurd in the dress of a Russian dignitary stepping out to meet his European visitors. He wore a dark blue coat; a large brass badge of office hung upon his breast. Ever since the great convulsion the Kurds have haunted the site of Akhury, rummaging for anything valuable in the buried ruins. Makar explained to us that we were now standing where once stood the prosperous township, with its ancient church and pleasant gardens. The woods of apricot, the rich vineyards have disappeared entirely; it would be difficult to discover a single tree. Just west of the miserable hamlet you still remark the deep watercourse which is the principal vent for the drainage of the ravine. The channel is dry at this season, and is overhung by steep banks some 100 to 150 feet high. We observed that these banks are composed of a sandy soil, inlaid with rocks. Yet the valley, even in autumn, is not entirely devoid of water; here and there we were refreshed by the sight of growing grass, and by the sound of little runnels. The trough of the ravine has at this point an elevation above sea-level of about 5570 feet, while its sides, which are formed by the cleft in the base of outer sheath of the mountain, are as yet scarcely more than 200 feet high. It extends almost in a straight line, and in a south-westerly direction, to the very heart of Ararat. The flanking cliffs rise and the valley narrows, until the formation assumes the proportions of a gulf many thousands of feet in depth, overhung by the snows of the summit region. Imagine a gigantic cutting, with a length of several miles, at the uppermost end of which an almost perpendicular precipice supports the snowy roof of Ararat! Even from this standpoint we could perceive the vertical seams at the head of the chasm, shadowed walls of grey rock with veins of

[1] Abich, *op. cit.* pp. 413, 414. It is evident that he had Wagner's objections in his mind.

orange hue, the higher ledges sprinkled with the first snows of autumn and half concealed by light, dissolving mist.

We mounted to the top of the cliff on the right or eastern side of the ravine, in order to obtain a view on either hand. Towards the east stretched the contours of the upper portion of the base, clothed with withered grass and strewn with stones. Abich tells us that these fragments are different in origin and character from the boulders and stones in the trough of the ravine; and, as we have seen, he uses the fact as a powerful weapon against the eruptive theory which Wagner propounds. Looking across the valley, our eyes rested on a little settlement on its opposite or western flank. It occupies a higher site than that of the Kurdish village, and may have been about a mile distant from where we stood. It interested us as well by its lonely and dangerous position as by an adjacent and isolated group of trees. It is called New Akhury, and, according to the official statistics, contains a population of some 400 Tartar inhabitants. It is the seat of a Cossack station, and bids fair to increase in size before the next earthquake shall sweep it away.

Makar directed our attention to some fallen gravestones, not many yards distant from where we stood. They are the remains of the cemetery of the old Akhury, and among them we admired several crosses with rich chasing in the old Armenian style. We found them overgrown with a thick, orange-hued lichen, resembling the appearance of rust. He told us that many of his relations had been buried in this graveyard, and he pointed out in particular a group of seven stones. He said that they marked the graves of seven brothers who had been killed in the gardens of the vanished township by the attacks of a single snake.

After regaling ourselves with delicious milk and eating an egg or two, we started at noon on our excursion up the ravine. We made our way along the eastern side of the chasm, sometimes picking our course as we might among the boulders, at others following a beaten path on higher ground. Not far beyond the hamlet we noticed a little spring, of which the water was trickling over. The next object to excite our interest was the peculiar formation of the floor of a side valley, in which we found ourselves at half-past twelve. Throughout an area of some 350 by 200 yards the ground was perfectly level, like a billiard table, with a smooth surface of sand and little pebbles. The length of this round ellipse followed the direction of the main ravine, which lay

at some considerable depth beneath it, and from which the basin of this valley was separated by a low bulwark of rock and soil. We were impressed by the sharp distinction between the bottom of this flat area and the banks which, on the one side, were formed by this bulwark and, on the other, by towering cliffs, overgrown with grass. The basin has an entrance and an exit gully, through which the waters collect and escape. Not a single pool lingered within it at this season, and it was difficult to realise that this warm and sunny recess probably owes its most distinctive features to the erosive action of ice.

We mounted ever higher up the slopes which flank the ravine. In the trough of the gulf we noticed another flat space, similar in character but less pronounced than that which I have described. Bushes of wild rose luxuriate on these cliff-sides, and from this foreground of rich tints and red berries we looked across to the dark and perpendicular precipices which encircle the head of the chasm. At every lift in the restless vapours we feasted our eyes on the snows of the summit, and we remarked the great length and horizontal profile of the summit-outline, seen between the opening arms of the abyss. Muffled women's figures, astride of their horses, came winding down the path. They were Armenian ladies, returning from a pilgrimage to St. Jacob's Well; foot-attendants held their bridles and picked their way.

At two o'clock we arrived at the famous rose bush and the holy well. The path has been worn by the feet of pilgrims, who journey hither from the plains. The water issues from a recess in the side of the mountain which has been levelled with a masonry of hewn stone. The overflow nourishes the rose-tree, on the twigs of which are attached countless little ribbons of rag, shreds from the garments of the devout. Just beyond these sacred objects you are shown a level site, overhanging the ravine. Rows of stones are interlaced upon its surface, a sign for pious wayfarers. Here was placed the little shrine which during the great earthquake must have tumbled headlong into the chasm. The pilgrims insert tiny sticks into the ground with the same little ribbons of rag. The holy water is a talisman against all kinds of calamities, and it is supposed to attract the birds which destroy the locusts when they desolate the country-side.

It is a fine standpoint from which to command the upper end of the chasm, which has here a width of some 500 yards. My illustration (Fig. 39) was taken from a spot close to the well and

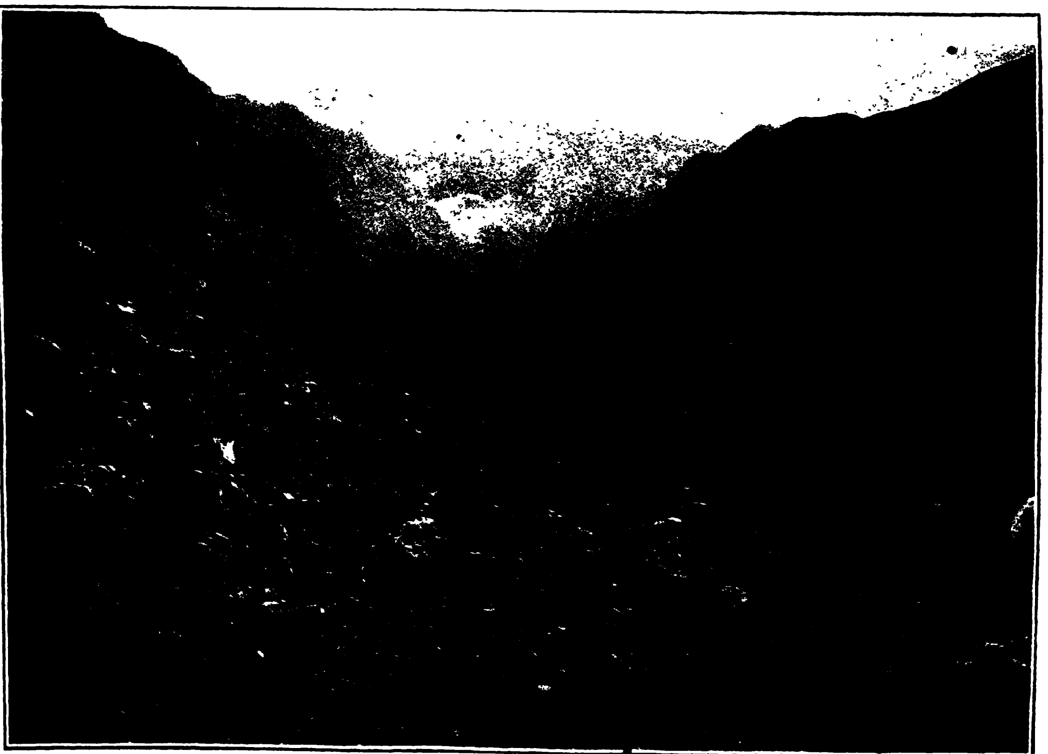


FIG. 39. AKHURY: INSIDE THE GREAT CHASM.

the site of the shrine, but perhaps a little lower down. The site itself has an elevation above sea-level of about 7500 feet.[1] The camera has belittled the natural features, and I must ask my reader to interpret my picture with the help of the reflection that the snows which overhang these perpendicular precipices are nearly 17,000 feet high. We penetrated further up the romantic valley, along the bed of a dry watercourse. Skirting the buttresses of the eastern wall, we observed that they were composed of a compact grey andesite with something of the appearance of slate. Seams of a rock similar in character, but which have turned red in weathering, lend variety to the surface of these bold bastions; while the dark face of the wall which mounts to the summit region is scored by extensive veins of that decomposed and orange-hued lava which spells destruction wherever it appears. The bottom of the ravine is covered by a deep beach of boulders, worn by the action of ice and water. Animal life is represented by a flock of crows or jackdaws, which croak and circle round you as you advance.

Behind the lofty wall of rock which is seen on the left of my illustration, in jagged outline against the snows, a glacier descends from the summit region which is probably the only true glacier on Ararat, and which I should judge to be gradually decreasing in extent. According to Abich, the long ridges which have the appearance of piles of boulders, and which are seen in his illustration descending the trough of the chasm to a point some distance below St. Jacob's Well, were composed in 1874 of compact and dirty glacier ice, covered over with stones and débris. He informs us that in 1844 there was a direct but deeply buried connection between this ice and the ice in the circus at the lower end of the glacier; and that in 1874 this connection had been severed, and the ice-hills themselves had decreased about one-third in height.[2] On the top of these ridges he discovered

[1] This was the reading of my Hicks mountain aneroid, which was working well, and it agrees with Parrot who says that the shrine stood about 1000 feet above the cloister, *i.e.* at about 7400 English feet. I fear, therefore, that Madame Chantre is in error in ascribing to the site of the cloister, much lower down, an elevation of 2250 metres or 7382 feet (*L'Arménie Russe*, p. 238). Monsieur Chantre, in his monograph on Ararat, confuses the site of the shrine with that of the cloister, an error which was also made by my Armenian guide (*Annales de Géographie*, Paris, 1893-94, vol. iii. pp. 81-94).

[2] Abich, *Geolog. Forsch.* part ii. p. 412, and see for the glacier, etc. pp. 397, 399, 400. The illustration is contained on Table VI. of his atlas. Parrot appears to be silent on the subject of this glacier; but Von Behagel, his companion, offers some remarks upon it (Parrot, 2nd part, p. 184). I may also refer my reader to Dr. Markoff's article in the *Bulletin de la société royale Belge de géographie*, 1888, p. 589.

a series of marshes and little lakes, of which the largest was several hundred paces in circumference. I cannot testify myself to the present condition of these ice-hills; I cannot even say that they exist. I did not see any ice in the trough of the chasm, although it was evident that its present condition was largely due to ice action, and although we admired a little lake of glacier water, set like a turquoise in the waste of mud and stones. It is computed that the actual glacier descends as low as a level of about 8000 feet—a notable fact when we consider that the line of perpetual snow on this side of Ararat is as high as 14,000 feet.

We lingered for some little space in the ravine beyond St. Jacob's Well, waiting for the clouds to lift. But they hung jealously about the upper slopes of the precipices, whence a mist descended upon us like rain. The mountain thundered; from time to time the mist was gently parted, and gave passage to the sun. If we were disappointed of a clear view of the higher regions, we were at least able to appreciate to the full the vista down the weird chasm to the fair landscape of the plain. The comparative straightness of the gulf renders such a prospect possible, even from its uppermost end. No projecting spur or interposed eminence obstructs the continuous stretch of the hollow outlines to the distant campagna of the river-side. On the horizon were the crinkled mountains in the direction of Lake Sevan, flushed with tints of delicate yellow and amethyst, lightly shaded with opal hues. Deep gloom lay upon the floor of the abyss, and only the pools of blue glacier water caught the brilliance of day. On the open base beyond these shadows the sinuous lines of dry watercourses led the eye into the expanse of the plain; and we could still see the recumbent blocks which once hung in pinnacles above the spot upon which we stood.

Evening was drawing in when we again reached the entrance to the chasm. We skirt the Kurdish village, we pass a pool of water and a group of barefooted Kurdish girls. Away on our left are the mud houses of the Tartar settlement, and the green clump of trees. To these succeed the bouquets of pink and white atraphaxis, and the scattered crags of conglomerate rock. A flora of great variety starts from the sand and among the stone. While we are crossing this upper region of the base, the sun disappears behind the still, grey clouds; the blue zenith pales and fades. A full moon rises from the grey clouds, wreathing

the landscape with soft lights. Heavy quiet reigns over the vast and lonely scene, and the only sound is the cicada's hum. The low, dark outline of the trees of Aralykh is a mere shadow on the plain. Nature touches the chords of that stately and solemn movement which issues in and faintly accompanies the life of man.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

The identification of Mount Ararat with the mountain upon which the Ark rested is at least as early as the adoption of Christianity by the Armenians, and may have been originally made by Jewish prisoners of war. But there does not appear to have existed in the neighbourhood of Ararat an independent local tradition of the Flood: and the mountain is still locally known not as Ararat, but as Masis to the Armenians, and as Aghri Dagh to the Tartars. It is, however, called Ararat in Armenian literature as early as Faustus of Byzantium, who uses the name in relating the story of St. Jacob of Nisibis (*Faustus*, iii. 10. The name appears to have been wrongly spelt Sararat by the copyists). The Ararat of Scripture is the Assyrian Urardhu; and the "mountains of Ararat" of Genesis viii. 4 must be sought within the country of Urardhu. Dr. Belck has quite recently examined, in the light of his remarkable researches into the lore of the Vannic texts, the question of the original geographical application of the term Urardhu (*Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie*, Berlin, 1899, pp. 113 *seq.*); it appears to have spread from a district in Kurdistan, south-west of Lake Urmi, to the country about Lake Van. It would, therefore, seem that the tendency of the term has been to travel north; for the Urardhu or Ararat of the historical period is the province about Mount Ararat, one of the great divisions in the kingdom of the Arsakid monarchs of Armenia, and well known under the name of Ararat to Agathangelus and the earliest Armenian writers. Mount Ararat could scarcely have been known to the peoples of the lowlands, among whom the Biblical legend of the Flood originated. Various aspects of the subject are well discussed by Suess (*Das Antlitz der Erde*, Leipzic, 1885, vol. i. pp. 25-92; *Die Sintfluth*), Bryce (*Transcaucasia and Ararat*, edition of 1896, pp. 211 *seq.*), and Sayce (*Dictionary of the Bible*, London, 1898, *sub voce Ararat*).

The fabric of Ararat composes an elliptical figure with an axis from north-west to south-east. The base plan measures about 28 miles in length, and about 23 miles in width. The fabric is built up by two mountains: Great Ararat (16,916 feet above the sea) and Little Ararat (12,840 feet). Their bases are contiguous at a level of 8800 feet, and their summits are 7 miles apart. Both are due to eruptive volcanic action; but no eruption of Ararat is known to have occurred during the historical period, and the summit of the greater mountain presents all the appearance of a very ancient and much worn-down volcano with a central

chimney or vent, long since filled in. I have already described the summit region of Great Ararat. The estimates or measurements of my predecessors are at variance with one another in detail; but one may assert that it consists of two separate elevations, divided one from the other by a depression some 100 to 150 feet in depth. The more easterly is much the larger, having the character of a spacious platform of saucer-like form. The more westerly presents the shape of a symmetrical cone, when seen from the platform; and is in connection with the snow-laden and almost horizontal bastions at the head of the north-western slope. Both elevations have about the same height; but, if anything, the more westerly is the higher.[1] The reader will be able to distinguish them in my photograph (Fig. 37), as well as to observe how they mingle together as mere crinkles in the crown of the dome. Parrot was inclined to think that the Ark came to rest in the depression between these two elevations.

Yielding in height to the most lofty peaks of the Caucasus in the north (Elburz, 18,525 feet), which are visible from the summit, and to Demavend (over 18,000 feet) in the belt of mountains which rise along the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, Ararat is by far the loftiest of the mountains of Armenia, and is over 1000 feet more elevated than the highest peak in Europe, Mont Blanc (15,780 feet). Moreover, Elburz and Kazbek, Mont Blanc, and even Demavend, all rise among a sea of mountains, of which they are little more than the highest crests. The isolation of Ararat is not its least interesting feature—a feature which I would fain hope is already imprinted upon my reader's mind. The plains which it overlooks belong to three empires; the frontiers of Persia, Turkey, and Russia meet upon its slopes.

It has been estimated that as late as the month of May the colossal mountain is covered with snow to a level of 9000 feet below the summit; and the appearance of this immense white sheet from the blooming campagna of the valley of the Araxes is one of the fine sights in the world. But by the month of September the snowy canopy will be confined to the dome of Great Ararat; and the limit of perpetual snow on the side facing the plain on the north is not less elevated than from 13,500 to 14,000 feet above the sea. The extensive depression through which the Araxes flows collects the heats of summer; and the warm air from this reservoir ascends the northern slopes of the mountain, melting the snow o a height which is greater than might be expected in this latitude.[2]

The best season for an ascent is the latter half of September. During

[1] Feodoroff, the companion of Parrot, measuring from the valley of the Araxes, estimated the difference at 7 feet; Khodzko at 120 feet; Bryce at "some 50 feet or so," all in favour of the more westerly elevation. My reader will notice that in the photograph (Fig. 37) the more easterly, viz. on the left hand, appears to be slightly higher; but this circumstance is due to the fact that it stands out a little in advance of its neighbour, when seen from the side of the country between Erivan and Aralykh.

[2] In estimating the level of the zone of perpetual snow on Ararat I am leaving out of account those smaller or greater collections of snow which owe their subsistence all through the summer to special circumstances, such as shelter from the sun.

Mr. D. W. Freshfield (*Exploration of the Caucasus*, London, 1896, vol. i. p. 55) gives 10,000 feet as a fair figure for the snow-level in the central chain of Caucasus.

October there is more chance of obtaining a view from the summit, which is usually most free from clouds in that month. But the days are, of course, shorter, and the fresh snow commences to lie. I should recommend the traveller with time upon his hands who may be anxious to extend our knowledge of the mountain to adopt the following programme:—(1) Ascend Little Ararat from Sardar Bulakh. (Good accounts are furnished by Parrot, *op. cit.* pp. 219 *seq.*; Stuart, *Proceedings R.G.S.* 1877, vol. xxi. pp. 77-92; Kovaleffsky, *Voyage au Mont Ararat*, Moscow, 1899 [*in Russian*]; Artsruni, *Verhand. Gesell. Erdkunde Berlin*, vol. xxii. 1895, pp. 606 *seq.*; Ebeling, *Verhand. Gesell. Erdkunde Berlin*, vol. xxv. 1898, pp. 130-132.) (2) Extend the journey to the southern slopes of Great Ararat, and thoroughly explore that side of the mountain. (3) Ascend Great Ararat, perhaps from a point a little further south than that indicated in my account; and (4) investigate the condition of the glacier in the chasm of Akhury. An interesting excursion may also be made to the little crater lake known as Kip Gol on the north-western slopes (see the accounts of Monsieur and of Madame Chantre in their writings already cited).

I append a list of the successful ascents of Great Ararat up to and including our own, so far as I have been able to ascertain them[1]:—

1. F. Parrot, 1829. Started from the monastery of St. Jacob (chasm of Akhury) and made the ascent by the north-western slope.
2. K. Spasky-Avtonomoff, 1834. From Akhury.
3. Herrmann Abich, 1845. From Sardar Bulakh.
4. H. D. Seymour, 1845. (From New Akhury ?).
5. J. Khodzko, N. V. Khanikoff, and others, 1850. From Sardar Bulakh.
6. R. Stuart and others, 1856. From Bayazid.
7. J. Bryce, 1876. From Sardar Bulakh.
8. G. P. Baker, 1878. From Sardar Bulakh.
9. Sivoloboff, 1882.
10. E. Markoff, 1888. From Sardar Bulakh.
11. Semenoff, 1888 (?).
12. Raphalovich and others, 1889. From Sardar Bulakh.
13. T. G. Allen and W. L. Sachtleben (1892 ?). From Bayazid.
14. Postukhoff, 1893. From Sardar Bulakh.
15. H. B. Lynch, H. F. B. Lynch, and Rudolph Taugwalder, 1893. From Sardar Bulakh.

[1] The account of an ascent in 1897 has quite recently come into my hands. It is written by Herr A. Oswald, whose attempt was crowned with complete success (*Eine Besteigung des Ararat* in Jahrb. schweiz. Alpenclub, Berne, 1899-1900, vol. xxxv. pp. 157-183).

CHAPTER XIV

RETURN TO ERIVAN

September 25.—We passed the morning upon the mound, in the little open summer-house, face to face with the airy snow-fields which we had scaled to their topmost vaulting, with the cavernous recesses which we had penetrated to their inmost core. Such is the silence of Nature at the foot of this solemn mountain that the faintest sound reaches the ear. I was therefore startled by a clamour of voices in the direction of the cantonment, and I hurried down towards the noise. A booted figure in drab uniform, covered with dust from head to foot, was gesticulating under the influence of extreme excitement to a little group of Russian military in their white tunics, accompanied by some languid Orientals at a respectful interval. It was the officer of Cossacks who had joined our party near Takjaltu, and who had left us at Sardar Bulakh. Suiting his gestures to his words, he was narrating a thrilling story of a night encounter with the Kurds. His little eyes were bloodshot and distended with emotion; his legs were parted and his feet planted firm. His detachment had fallen in with a band of marauders, who had carried off some cattle from over beyond Akhury, and made away towards the Turkish frontier. They had fired on the Kurds, who had returned their fire; they had recovered the cattle and chased the Kurds away. I enquired what bag he had made of these human vultures, and he replied, with a sigh, that they had carried off their dead.

On the further side of the Araxes, opposite Aralykh, is situated the celebrated monastery of Khor Virap, which marks the spot where, according to Armenian tradition, Saint Gregory, the founder of Christianity in Armenia, was imprisoned for thirteen years in a deep pit. The country about and behind the cloister

is extremely rich in historical and archæological interest, and I would recommend the traveller to prolong his excursion up the romantic valley of the Garni, whence he can return across the mountains to Erivan. He will examine the sites of Artaxata and Dvin, and, proceeding up the river, will reach the gorge with the basaltic columns, and the platform where once stood the temple of King Tiridates—a beautiful Greek shrine given to these solitudes, like the temple of Segesta to the lonely Sicilian hills. Hard by this platform above the river are found the relics of the city of Garni; and, near the sources of the stream, at a distance of some five miles from Garni, the caves and monastery of Surb Geghard, reputed to have been founded by St. Gregory, respond to the spirit of a landscape which for grandeur and severity is unsurpassed among these wilds. I was anxious to make the acquaintance of some at least among these antiquities; we therefore despatched our luggage with the Swiss and the cook to Erivan, and, availing ourselves of the offer of a victoria as far as Khor Virap, resolved to trust to fortune for the remainder of the way.[1]

Had we been able to procure riding-horses, we might probably have ridden from the ferry over the Araxes direct to the cloister across the plain. In a carriage we were obliged to retrace our steps as far as Kamarlu, where the road which runs parallel to the course of the river crosses the road to Erivan. The stage which we had made after nightfall between that village and Aralykh was now performed in the light of day. The alluvial flats between the Araxes and the base of Ararat are channelled by a network of irrigation runnels, which diffuse the stream of the Kara Su. From the fields and marshes rise luxuriant cotton and castor oil plants, the one with yellow single blossoms, like a wild rose, and drooping fruit, resembling flakes of snow; the other, higher than these, raising a tender, juicy stem to shining, palm-shaped leaves. Here and there, where the water fails, bushes of hardy camelthorn spring up, like weeds, upon the

[1] For Artaxata, Dvin, Khor Virap, etc., see Ker Porter's *Travels* (vol. ii. pp. 619 *seq.*); Morier (*Second Journey*, p. 316 and pp. 339 *seq.*); Dubois (*op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 382 *seq.*); Smith and Dwight (*op. cit.* pp. 273 *seq.*). Dubois mentions, but was unable to visit, the grottoes of Okhtchapert on the direct road between Erivan and Garni, p. 402. They are mentioned by Telfer (*Crimea and Transcaucasia*, vol. i. p. 210), who passed by them on his way to Garni from Erivan. Telfer's book should be consulted by English readers for an account of these various antiquities. I would also recommend to the archæologist who is desirous of investigating the question of the site of Artaxata a reference to Dubois (vol. iii. p. 449).

fallow land. The oppressive climate of Aralykh, no less than the plague of insects which infest it, are due to the sand upon the pedestal of the mountain, and to these swamps with their effluvia and mosquito swarms. Even at this season the sun beats fiercely upon the plain; and, when we reached the ferry, a herd of buffaloes and bullocks, awaiting transport, were rolling parched tongues and casting longing eyes at the river from the bank of crumbling mud.

A double pontoon, staged across with planks, received our carriage, and was swiftly impelled along the hawser by the force of the stream. From the opposite margin a dreary tract of baked alluvial soil extends to the zone of gardens and orchards which commences at Kamarlu. I have already alluded to the excellence of the road within that zone; but by day you will be loth to hasten along it, such is the charm and so great the interest of the scene. The traffic from the lower Araxes, from Persia and distant Mesopotamia, finds its way along this *chaussée* to Erivan. The district is inhabited by well-to-do people, who can afford the richness of their national dress. Beneath the foliage of the needle poplars, between the well-maintained mud walls—over which you look to the vineyards and to the vegetable gardens, where the tomato and the chili abound—a stream of wayfarers, some on horseback, fill the pleasant avenue, chatting and smiling under the expansive influence of ease and shade. At intervals you pass a house or cluster of houses, where groups of Armenian women in their holiday attire are gathered before the open doors. They are clad in their gayest cottons, and wear their picturesque head-dress and veils of white gauze. Some among them nurse their babes at the open bosom, the little infant cleaving to the full breasts. Tartars, with their black lambskin hats and dark blue or black garments, compose an element which a cynic would be loth to dispense with in such a scene of piping peace; yet it would be difficult to detect a trace on their clean-shaven faces of passions which have, perhaps, been blunted by time. Laden waggons pass, and numerous bullock-carts, with their heavy, creaking wheels. We were amused by the appearance of a curious pair of riders who, to judge from the deference which was bestowed upon them, were evidently of exalted rank. The man wore a flowing beard and was dressed in Oriental apparel; but he held in his hand a parasol of European pattern, and his locks were surmounted by an English *billycock* hat. His

wife was by his side, astride of her Arab; but the graceful animal was almost invisible beneath her, his withers overtowered by the huge bulk of her stomach, and his back enveloped in the folds of her robes. It was an Assyrian bishop, journeying from Mosul.

Kamarlu is perhaps a type of these villages of the campagna, in which the population is composed of Armenians and Tartars, of lambs and lions living side by side. It can boast a Russian schoolhouse, a necessary institution in the case of the Tartars, to judge by the barbarous and hideous frescos which enliven the façade of their little mosque. The Armenians have their school, and there are two Gregorian churches in which they satisfy their spiritual needs. The houses are built of sun-baked bricks and mud; wooden stages rise to some height above the flat roofs, and provide airy sleeping-places for the inhabitants during the summer heats. After regaling ourselves with the delicious white grapes of the district, we turned aside from the road to Erivan. Crossing the outskirts of the village, we remarked the huge clay wine jars which were strewn about in the courtyards. Beyond a few fields, planted with cotton, we again entered the open desert, and pursued our way over the crumbling mud. A rude and winding track leads towards the river through patches of dusty desert shrubs. Ararat fills the landscape, and is rarely seen to greater advantage than from such tracts of naked land. On our left hand rose a buttress of the Sevan mountains which had been a landmark from the slopes of Ararat. It is composed of a sandy rock of various hues, which has weathered into fanciful shapes. In the delicate evening lights it is invested with the appearance of some castle in fairyland.

From time to time we passed strings of three or four large waggons, drawn by teams of oxen. Whole families of Armenians were gathered within them, well dressed and well-to-do. They were returning to their dwellings within the zone of gardens from a pilgrimage to Khor Virap. The men were emptying their little glasses, which they would replenish from wine-skins, and feasting on water melons.

We arrived at the mound which rises from the flats about the river and can be clearly seen from Ararat. According to Dubois,[1] it consists of a mass of dolomite, isolated on the surface of the plain. The church and cloister have been built on the side of

[1] *Op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 480.

the eminence; the monastic dwellings screened the church from our view. St. Gregory's dungeon is situated within the precincts; and it would appear that the place was famous in the saint's lifetime for a much-frequented temple of the fire-worshippers.

We were scarcely beneath the walls when the figure of a horseman springs forward from some recess into the road. Throwing his white Arab on to his haunches at a few yards before our carriage, he challenges and constrains us to pull up dead. This proceeding on his part, no less than his forbidding countenance, throws me completely off my guard. On Russian soil one is obliged to smother the irritation which is always threatening to burst forth from a British breast. I shout to him to move aside, or we will whip the horses and drive through him; to this he answers by drawing his revolver and threatening to shoot. I ask him by what right he dared to obstruct the roadway; he replies by enquiring by what credentials we presume to pass. It flashes through me that the game is in the hands of this ruffian—we had been spoilt by the attentions of the high officials, and to such an extent that we had forgotten to bring even our passports, which had gone in our despatch box to Erivan. It was useless to urge that one could not be obliged to show a passport in order to be allowed to visit a church. He paid no heed to any of our arguments, and compelled us to return with him to Kamarlu. He even added the insult of requiring us to suit our pace to his, and to follow at a walk or amble by his side. This we flatly refused to do, and, taking the reins from the trembling coachman, proceeded at a brisk trot. Simon Ter-Harutiunoff—such was the name of this ferocious person—is linked in our memory with the companion picture of Ivan the Terrible, our stern custodian during the Akhaltsykh days. Both are Armenians, and either might be taken as a model for the embodiment of the fighting instincts in man. Tartars and Cossacks are amenable creatures besides them; and of the two, we were inclined to bestow the palm upon Simon. His face was black with exposure to the sun; the eyes were yellow round the dark iris and shot with red veins. His features were large and pronounced, but of singular deformity; the massive head was placed upon broad shoulders above a frame of great bulk and iron strength. He wore two medals, won during the war with Turkey through personal bravery. His function in time of peace was to police the Persian frontier in the district of Khor Virap.

These particulars we learnt in the office of the Pristav, upon our return under such escort to Kamarlu. We claimed and were permitted to proceed to Erivan; but the chapars were instructed to prevent us from diverging, and to hand us over to the Nachalnik at the provincial capital. In this manner we were foiled in our antiquarian researches among these ancient sites. At Khor Virap we saw nothing but some slight convexities in the surface of the ground, which may be caused by buried remains. Beyond the mound we observed a natural wall of rock, rising like a gigantic ruin above the plain.

Evening had approached as we left the village, and proceeded through the gardens, and crossed to the barren zone beyond. From the rising ground we looked back over the forest of poplars to the sun setting behind the peaks of the Ararat chain. The satellite range wore the same tints of deep, opaque opaline which fretted the horizon during our outward journey. It was shadowed upon the same ground of orange and amber; and the opal hues of the land forms extended round the circle and included the huge, horizontal outline of Alagöz. But the Sevan mountains, in the opposite segment, were touched with pink and luminous yellows; the higher summits were white with fresh snow. In the south-east the landscape was dim and vaporous; nor could the eye distinguish among the gathering shadows the basal slopes of Ararat. The snow-fields of the dome shone with a cold light in the sky, above vague banks of cloud. It was after eight o'clock when we reached the pleasant town garden, and discussed our adventures with the Nachalnik over a cigar.

CHAPTER XV

AT ERIVAN

ORIENTAL cities—and Erivan is still essentially Oriental—may perhaps be said to be built upon two planes. There is the plane of the street, and there is the plane of the flat roofs, all at about the same level. Where the climate during summer renders the rooms of the house untenantable after the walls have been heated through by the sun, the daily life of the inhabitants undergoes a corresponding division into the life of the street and the life of the roof. About an hour before sunset the entire population mounts from the lower apartments, or even from the cellars, to the open platforms, floored with mud and sometimes protected by a low balustrade, which receive the freshness of the evening breeze. It is there that the last and first meals of the day are served, and the quilts spread upon which sleep is enjoyed beneath the stars. A strange scene it is when the faint light of morning has broken, and when the recumbent forms commence to stir. The divisions made by the narrow streets are scarcely perceptible; your own roof appears to join the roofs of your neighbours, and these to compose a single and elevated stage above the landscape of dim earth and flashing stream. Figures, erect from the waist, are revealed in every posture; and it may happen that the cotton drapery has dropped from a woman's shoulders as she stretches her arms in the fancied seclusion of some partial screen. Such scenes are the daily accompaniment of a summer sojourn in the towns upon the lowlands through which the Euphrates and the Tigris flow. In Armenia, with a mean level of several thousand feet above the sea, the practice of sleeping in the open is confined to the depression of this plain of the Araxes; and even here it is only partially indulged. The better-to-do among the inhabitants take refuge in the adjacent mountains when their dwellings have

become little better than furnaces. The traveller is advised to swelter within four walls rather than tempt fever from the expanse of irrigated land by exposing himself to the night air.

Yet the twofold division of the city into an upper and a lower region is nowhere more productive of startling contrast than in this town of gardens which is Erivan. In the streets, lined as they are with the rude stone walls of the enclosures, surmounted by a crumbling ridge of clay, the vistas are confined by inexorable foliage to the space of a stone's throw. The central park, with its

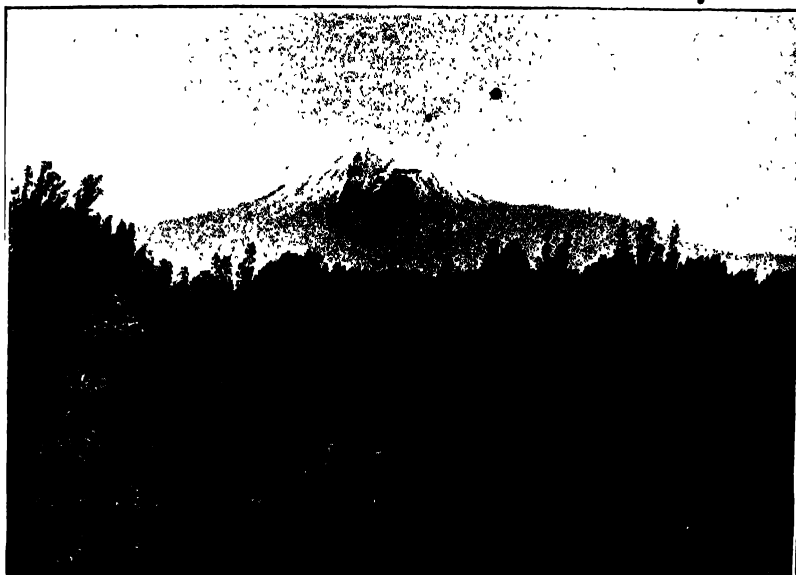


FIG. 40. ARARAT FROM A HOUSE-TOP IN ERIVAN.

wide spaces, enjoys no further landscape than that which is limited by the zones of the adjacent buildings or by its own lofty forest trees. Where you are not threading the narrow alleys of the more thickly inhabited quarters, you will be winding by irregular ways, deep in white dust, by the side of swirling water or within hearing of its murmur beyond the bulwark which screens the orchard from the lane. But from the standpoint of the roof the horizon expands to boundaries which are so remote that they are scarcely conceivable by a European mind. The foliage or the hollow of the site eliminates the middle distance; and the opposite piles of Great Ararat in the south (Fig. 40) and of

Alagöz in the north (Fig. 41) rise immediately from the soft foreground of the embowered houses. The landscape from the high ground on the north, as you approach Erivan by the road from Tiflis, is difficult to forget (Fig. 42). The whole fabric of Ararat is exposed from base to summits; but so tall are the poplars and luxuriant the countless varieties of fruit trees, that they almost conceal the domes of the mosques and the cupolas of the churches, spread over the straggling township at your feet.

All this verdure is mainly due to the river Zanga, the Hrazdan



FIG. 41. ALAGÖZ FROM A HOUSE-TOP IN ERIVAN.

of the Armenians, which collects the drainage of a section of the southern slopes of the border range, and which is fed by the waters of Lake Sevan, called also Gökcheh, from its sky-blue colour, and by Armenian writers the Lake of Gegham. This beautiful alpine sea is surrounded by lofty mountains and has an area 2½ times as large as that of Geneva. It produces salmon trout of delicious flavour which are seldom absent from the bill of fare in the provincial capital. It finds an outlet through the Zanga into the Araxes at a difference in the level of 3600 feet. The brawling Zanga, already weakened by the canals which diffuse its waters, pursues a devious course at the foot of high and rocky banks on the western outskirts of the town. Further east-

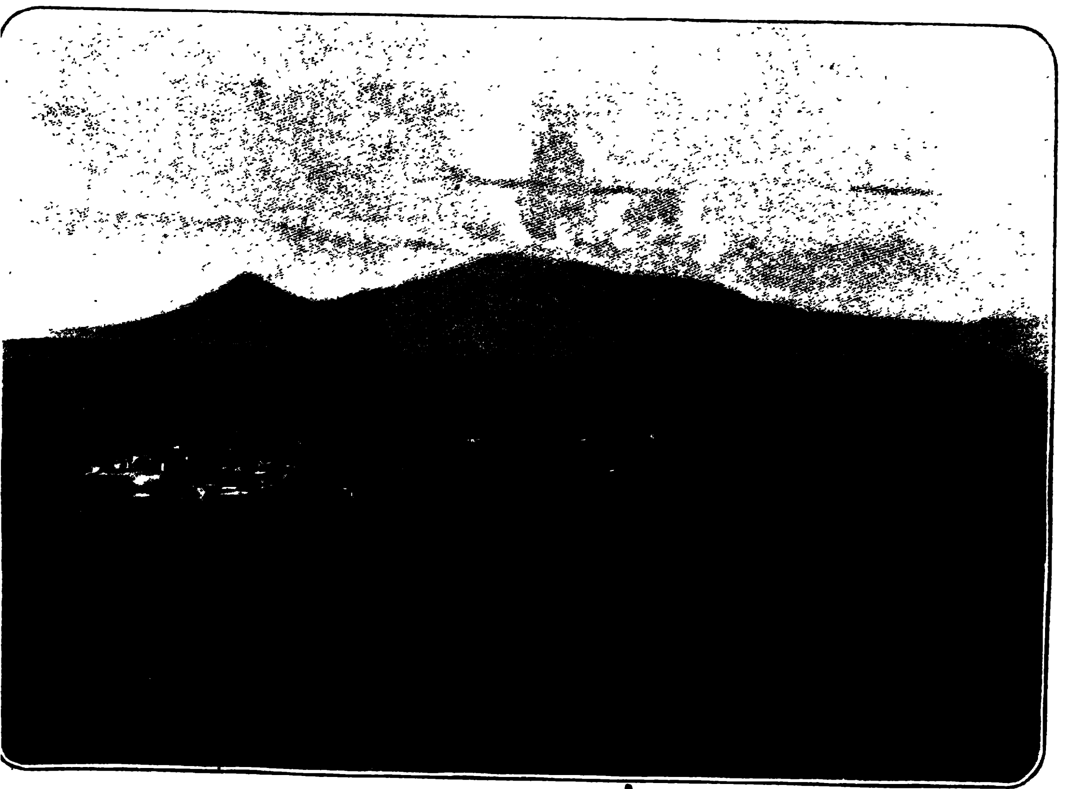


FIG. 42 ERIVAN AND ARARAT FROM THE NORTH.

wards the irrigation is supplied by the Kirk Bulakh, a stream of which the name signifies forty springs, and which has its sources at no great distance from Erivan. Such abundance of running water should secure to this growing city a large measure of prosperity under settled government. As the centre of the most populous of the Armenian provinces of the Russian Empire, to which it gives its name, it is already a place of some pretensions. But the inhabitants do not at present number more than 15,000, of whom half are Tartars and half Armenians. This total also comprises about 300 Russians, whose most conspicuous units are the drivers of the carriages on hire, belonging, I believe, exclusively to the Molokan sect.[1]

Erivan does not possess any monuments of first-rate merit or of great antiquity. Her origin is obscure. Noah may quite well have lived here before the Deluge, as one of the earliest of modern European visitors was informed by his Armenian friends.[2] The popular derivation of the name is from the Armenian verb *erevel*, and it is said to signify *appearing*. The place would, indeed, be about the first locality in the plain region to appear to the eyes of the patriarch of old.[3] Hither may have been directed his steps and those of his family when the waters had receded from a world renewed. This may be the site of the original city of Noah, perhaps preserved beneath the soil upon which is built the present town. The more learned are inclined to a much later foundation, but do not yield in point of philological plausibility to the champions of the identification with Noah's city. They say that the name has been shortened from Erovantavan, which they render *the place where Erovant was defeated*. Erovant or Ervand was an Armenian monarch of the first century who was vanquished in this region by the lawful heir to the throne of the Arsakids at the head of a Persian army. The event and the survival of the name Erovantavan are attested by Moses of Khorene.[4] The

[1] According to the Jesuit, Père Monier, who wrote an account of the mission at Erivan in the eighteenth century, there were only 4000 inhabitants of the town proper in his day. Of these only one-fourth were Armenians (*Lettres Édifiantes, Mémoires du Levant*, Paris, 1780, vol. iii. p. 25). In the thirties of last century the usual estimate seems to have been 2500 families or at least 10,000 souls, of whom some 700 to 1000 families were Armenian (Smith and Dwight, *Missionary Researches*, p. 279; Sijalski, *Aufenthalt in Erivan, Das Ausland*, Augsburg, 1839). The Armenians are rapidly turning the tables upon the Tartars.

[2] Chardin, edit. Paris, 1811, vol. ii. p. 169.

[3] "Eriván, apparens, quia regio ista prima apparuit Noe cum descenderet ex monte Ararat" (Villotte, *Dict. Arm.* p. 273, quoted by Langlès ap. Chardin, *loc. cit.*).

[4] Moses of Khorene, vol. ii. p. 46.

Mohammedan derivation from Revan Kul, a prince of the reign of Shah Ismail (1502-1524),[1] who is said to have fortified the place by his master's order, cannot be reconciled with the fact that Erivan was already in existence certainly in the eleventh and probably in the seventh century.[2] But it played no prominent part whether in ancient or mediæval history until the advent of the Ottoman Empire. From the sixteenth century into modern times it was continually disputed between the Sultans and their powerful neighbours on the east, the Persian Shahs. The enumeration of the sieges it sustained at the hands of Turks and Persians would be a tax upon my reader's patience which I am not disposed to levy. When the Russians appeared on the scene it was in Persian possession; and an unsuccessful attempt on their part to capture the fortress in 1804 supplied the ground for the firm belief in its impregnability which was cherished by its Persian governors. This confidence was rudely shattered by Paskevich in October 1827. His shells wrought fearful havoc in the unsubstantial town, and one is said to have pierced the dome of the mosque in the citadel, whither thousands of the wretched inhabitants had fled for protection against the hail of the cannon. The Russian army entered the place without encountering any serious obstacle, and the Russian flag has waved there ever since.[3]

One might expect to find some mosques of considerable age in a city which flourished under its Mohammedan masters. One must, however, recollect that the Ottoman Turks are Sunnis and

[1] Lane Poole, *Mohammedan Dynasties*, London, 1894, p. 259.

[2] For the Mohammedan tradition see *Travels of Evliya*, translated by Von Hammer, London, 1850, vol. ii. p. 150. "In the year 810 (A.D. 1407) Khoja Khan Lejehani, a rich merchant of Timur's suite, settled here (at Erivan) with all his family and servants, cultivating plantations of rice, by which means a great Kent was soon formed. Five years later Shah Ismail gave to Revan Kul, one of his khans, an order to build a castle here, which, being finished in seven years, was named after him Revan or Erivan." The *five years* of Evliya are incomprehensible to me. Erivan is mentioned by John Katholikos, who wrote in the eleventh century, as having been a considerable place in the seventh (Saint-Martin's translation, Paris, 1841, p. 80).

[3] Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage autour du Caucase*, Paris, 1839, vol. iii. pp. 346 *seq.* When Morier, secretary to the British Embassy to Persia, visited the sirdar or governor of Erivan in 1814, he was told by his host with great gravity that "if three or four of the kings of Fireng (Europe) were to unite to take this castle, they might just take the trouble of going back again, for their labours would be in vain" (Morier, *Second Journey*, London, 1818, p. 319). The sirdar's view was not held by British officers, one of whom, in giving an account of his visit in 1837, says, "I had expected to find the castle almost impregnable from the honours which were heaped upon the Marshal Paskevich for its capture, and was quite surprised to find a mere Turkish fort, strong indeed by nature on one side, but on the other three defended merely by a mud wall, and commanded from all the adjoining hills" (Wilbraham, *Travels in the Transcaucasian Provinces*, etc., London, 1839).

the Persians Shiahs; what the one may erect the other loves to destroy. We are expressly told that when Shah Safi took the place in A.D. 1635 all the mosques built by the Turks were razed to the ground.[1] About the same time the position of the town, or perhaps only of the fortress, underwent a change, being removed some eight hundred paces to its present site on the rocky cliffs at the foot of which the Zanga flows.[2] The Persians do not appear to have enriched it at that period with any remarkable buildings; and it was recovered by the Turks in 1724.[3] Some ten years later it again fell into the hands of the Persians as one of the conquests of Nadir Shah. The principal mosque is said to date from the reign of this monarch. The curious old tower which was seen by Chardin as well as by Tournefort, and of which the lineaments have been handed down to us by the former of these travellers, has long since disappeared.

Still the buildings which at present exist are well worth a visit; and I propose to invite my reader to accompany me in a leisurely ramble through the alleys of Erivan. The more populous quarters are divided into a western and an eastern half, at first by the broad, metalled road which comes from Tiflis, and, further south, by the central park. Speaking generally, the eastern half is inhabited by the Tartars and the western by the Armenians. In the one you will discover the mosques, in the other the churches. But the churches are either small and quite insignificant stone structures, or have been restored beyond recognition in comparatively recent and tasteless times. I counted no less than six, including the Russian church at the southern extremity of the town. Of these the oldest foundation would appear to be that of Surb Katholike, which Surb Katholike
stands in a pleasant walled garden, adjoining the great road, in the upper or northern quarter. An ancient elm dwarfs the humble oblong edifice, which is entered from a portal on the south side, added in 1861. The interior, which is very low, is disposed in a nave and aisles, an apse and two side apses or chapels. Chardin attributes a church of this name to the latest

[1] "In dieser abermahligen Veranderung seynd auch alle Turkische Moscheen der Stadt übern Hauffen geworffen . . . also das etliche dergleichen Tempel bis zum Fundament erniedriget und übel ärger von Persianen verwustet als jemahl die Kirchen der Christen von Türcken zugerichtet worden seynd. So zuchtiget Gott die Mahumetaner mit Mahumetanern" (Schillinger, *Persianische und Ost-Indianische Reise vom Jahr 1699 bis 1702*, Nurnberg, 1707).

[2] Tavernier, edit. of Paris, 1679, vol. i. p. 37; Père Monier, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 24.

[3] Von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osm. Reiches*, vol. vii. p. 321.

kings of Armenia, and the priests assured me that it was indeed the earliest in date at Erivan. It was here that in Persian times the katholikos would officiate, while residing in the provincial capital.

Paulos Petros. A little lower down the road we pass Paulos Petros (Paul and Peter), the largest and the least pleasing of the town churches. But once we have left the wide avenue to become involved in the network of gardens on the north and north-west, any mediocrity in the buildings we visit is amply compensated by the charm of the enclosures in which they stand. Such verdure of every shade and constant hum of flowing water! To Surb Joannes we come first—four walls and a metal roof, to which is attached a wooden belfry, painted green. You see the Zanga issuing from a cleft in the barren hills, of which the hardness contrasts with the foliage at their base. The little portal of Joannes is quite a pretty feature, and I was informed that the church dates from the latter part of the seventeenth century. A more ambitious structure is Surb Zoravar, situated some little distance in an easterly direction, but still within the zone of these high slopes on the north. It is surrounded by old gardens and overshadowed by walnut trees. The body of the church is quite plain, four walls and a roof of low pitch; but an elaborate portal, surmounted by a belfry and supported by four massive piers, extends the whole length of the west front. Two piers in the centre are panelled and richly carved by the most delicate of chisels. There is a very old doorway on the south side with spiral mouldings, and the frescos over the principal entrance—a rare feature—are well drawn and show good feeling for colour. I understand that the present church has supplanted an older building; but I will not vouch for the statement that the portal is due to Moses Katholikos (A.D. 1629-1363), as I was informed by the aged and ignorant priest. He came at last, after many peals from the belfry, his tottering frame supported by a lay companion. The clergy of Erivan are not more enlightened than the most backward of their profession in remote districts of the Turkish provinces.

Surb Joannes.

Surb Zoravar.

On the other hand the greater material well-being of the laity is made manifest by the air of comparative comfort presented by the interiors of their places of worship. Of course one misses the pews of our English churches, or the serried lines of chairs which furnish the temples of the Continent. But the floors are

well carpeted and the bare walls kept in repair. From Surb Zoravar one may readily regain the Tiflis road and pass in a southerly direction along the central park. Thence it is no great distance to the principal mosque of the city, the Gök Jami or mosque of heaven. This edifice is situated in the western half of Erivan, and is surrounded by dwellings of Tartars in considerable number, overlapping into the Armenian quarters. It is approached from the narrow streets of a bazar consisting of booths, and is entered by a handsome doorway at the side of an imposing minaret, of which the surface is diversified by designs in polychrome tiles (Fig. 43). You pass through a vaulted passage into the great court (Fig. 44). It is a vast place, shady and serene. Lofty elms of great age shadow the basin of overflowing water which bubbles in the centre of the paved spaces. Upon its margin are gathered figures in long robes and turbans, or attired in the Persian fashion and wearing the Persian lambskin hat. These are busy with their ablutions; while elsewhere, beneath the shade, mollahs are instructing groups of their younger pupils, seated on mats spread upon the flags. Beds of single dahlias refresh and please the eye. Of life and movement there is no

Gök Jan

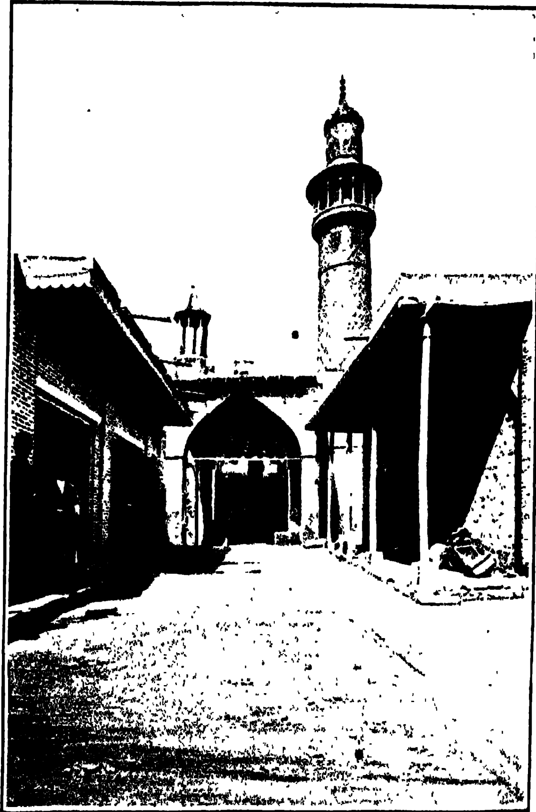


FIG. 43 ENTRANCE TO GÖK JAMI, ERIVAN.

lack; people are coming and going; there in the distance a train of shapeless forms in deep blue draperies makes its way to the women's mosque. But the absence of the least suspicion of haste spreads an atmosphere of delightful repose. It requires no small fortitude—they would call it diseased curiosity—to pace from side to side and ascertain that this quadrangle measures 87 paces by 58. The latter is the dimension of the side on the south, upon which is built the temple itself (Fig. 45). Beneath the spacious dome men and women are gathered indiscriminately, the women veiled



FIG 44. COURT WITH BASIN OF GÖK JAMI, ERIVAN

in Persian fashion. There is nothing very remarkable in the architecture of the mosque; but the floral paintings which adorn the ceiling of a companion and smaller edifice on the north side of the court are of very high merit. The remainder of the quadrangle is taken up by rows of low buildings, containing chambers in which the older scholars pursue their studies. One wonders what they may be learning. A mollah of importance informs us that the Gök Jami was built in the time of Nadir Shah (A.D. 1736-1747) by the sirdar, Hoseyn Ali Khan.

With the exception of the mosque in the fortress, the religious edifices of the Mohammedans are extremely well maintained. I counted three mosques in the Tartar quarters.

That of Haji Nusrallah Bey and the Shehr Jami (town mosque) are almost exactly similar in design. The former is evidently a replica of the latter, which displays a Turkish inscription on the outer door with a date which we read as 1098 (A.D. 1687). But it must have been restored since that time. Although much smaller than Gök Jami, it bears some resemblance to that building; and the walled court with its fountain and beds of long-stalked dahlias is as pleasant a refuge from dusty alleys as man could desire. Haji Nusrallah Bey. Shehr Jami.

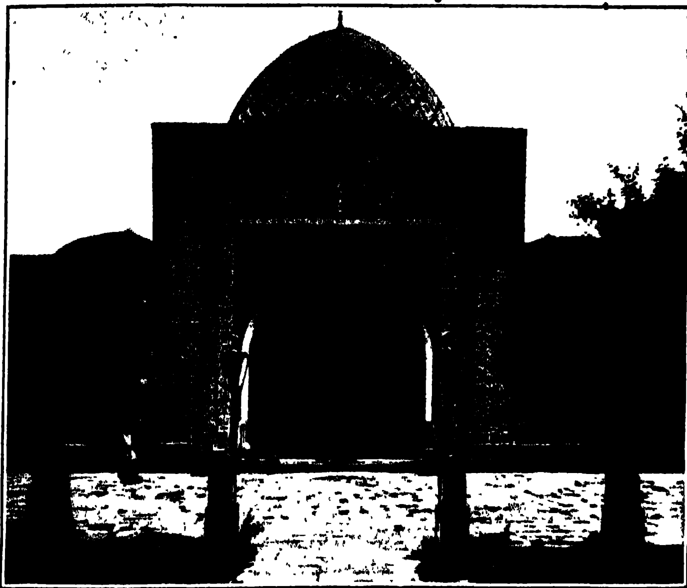


FIG. 45. THE TEMPLE, GÖK JAMI.

But perhaps the most interesting monument is the kiosque of the sirdars, in the extreme southern angle of the town. We may approach it from the west, and take Surb Sargis on the way. That church and pleasant terrace on the high land above the Zanga commands an extensive view over the southern quarters and across the plain to Ararat. The deeply-bedded river is flowing on an easterly course towards the fortress and the gardens of the sirdars outside its walls. After skirting those parapets it will turn abruptly in the reverse direction, and pursue a more tranquil career to the Araxes. The fortress to which we proceed is still some distance off, and the walls of mud Kiosque of the sirdars. Surb Sargis.

and rubble which line the cliffs on the left bank of the Zanga are rapidly falling into total ruin. While they are flanked by the swirling stream they may once have possessed some power of resistance; but after the river has deserted the site beyond the abrupt bend, the town is exposed immediately to the plain. The sirdar's palace composes the kernel of the fortified area, and its windows overlook the river. But the extensive buildings of his well-stocked harem, the magazines of his garrison and the abodes of his courtiers have either disappeared altogether or are rapidly crumbling away. From among a heap of ruins rises intact a single edifice, which is kept in repair by the Russians. It is the pavilion in which the sirdar was wont to beguile his leisure. From the window in the alcove of this elaborate interior (Fig. 46) he would feast his eyes on the landscape—the river at his feet, his own shady garden in the plain, the dim spaces backed by the fabric of Ararat. Here he exercised his skill as a marksman upon the donkeys of the unfortunate peasants, sending a ball through them as they wound along the road on the right bank of the Zanga towards the bridge with its two pointed arches.[1] This bridge is placed just below the pavilion, and is still the only avenue of communication between Erivan and the country beyond the river. What consummation of Oriental felicity to sit on cushions in this glittering apartment and watch the caravans which fill your coffers defiling below! From time to time there may come an embassy to your overlord of Persia, and there will be a report to dictate upon the size and splendour of the cavalcade. The beauties of Georgia and Circassia luxuriate in the adjoining halls, and water flows in abundance everywhere. The governor of Erivan was quite a little king in the country, and, when he travelled, the inhabitants of the villages along his route would immolate an ox in his honour.[2]

The incrustation which my reader may admire upon the vaulting of the alcove is composed of pieces of mirror which shine like the facets of a jewel. An encrusted cornice of the same material surmounts the walls of the pavilion below a ceiling profusely adorned with floral designs, conspicuous being the iris and the rose. Eight paintings on canvas, applied to shallow recesses, are distributed around the room. I believe they are copies, made since the Russian occupation, of originals which had fallen into decay. The two which are comprised by my

[1] Morier, *Second Journey*, p. 320. [2] Dubois de Montpéreux, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 452.

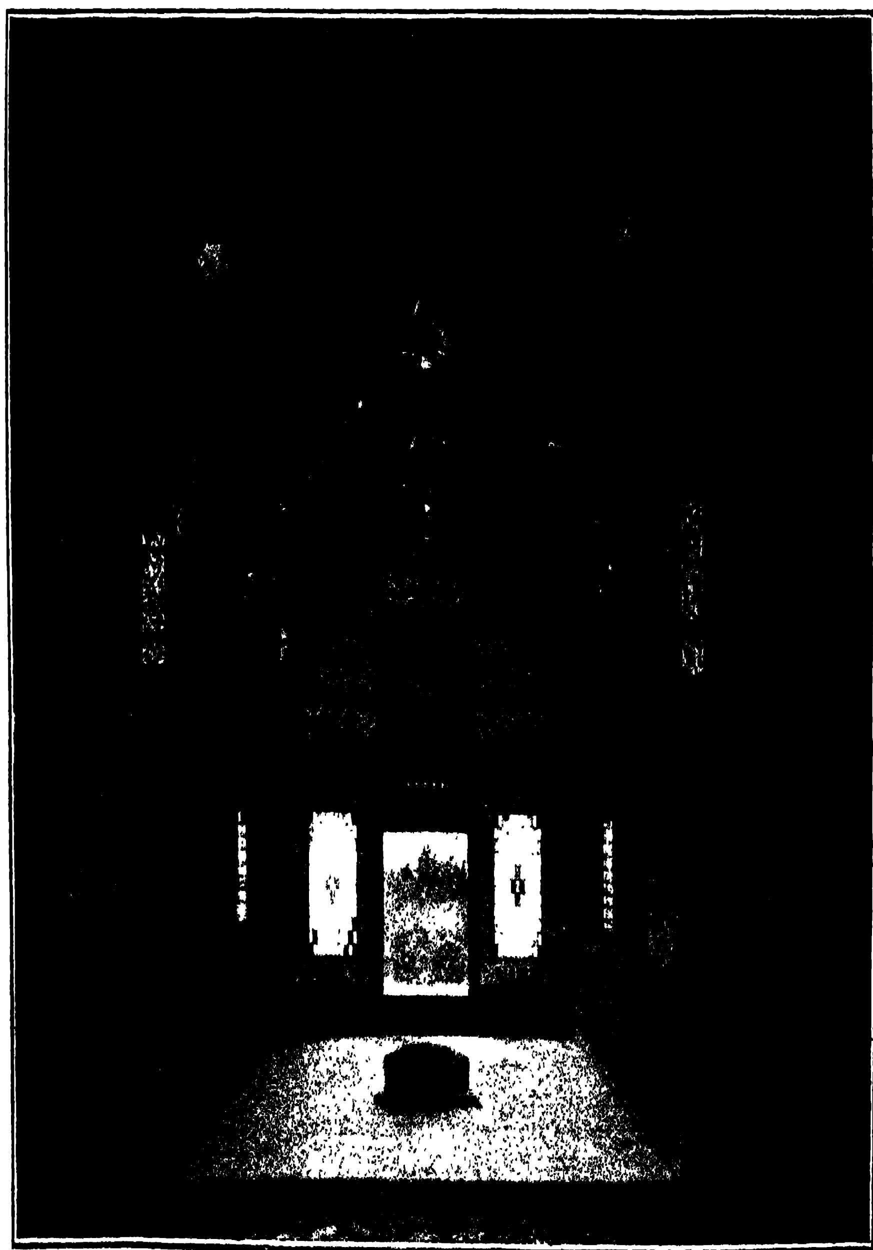


FIG. 46. ERIVAN: INTERIOR OF THE KIOSQUE OF THE SIRDARS.

illustration, one on either side of the alcove, represent on the left hand the figure of Hoseyn Khan Sirdar, and, on the right, the Persian hero Feramez. Of the remainder, three are portraits —Fath Ali, Shah of Persia (1797-1834), his son Abbas Mirza and Hasan Khan, brother to the Sirdar Hoseyn; while an equal number are indifferent renderings of heroic personages—the warriors Sherab and Rustem, and a Persian Amazon. One of my predecessors has recorded that at the time of his visit in 1834 the panels in the alcove were adorned with four pictures setting forth subjects which were well conceived to amuse the fancy of an old debauchee. A Mussulman was receiving wine from a fair Georgian in the presence of the monks of Edgmiatsin, whose arguments had been less potent to effect his conversion than the fleshly charms of the Christian girl. A Persian beauty in loose trousers and diaphanous upper garment was making her obeisance to the Shah. Here a prince of the blood royal in costume of the chase dallied with a maiden while her aged father lay asleep; there the beautiful features of Joseph spread havoc among the assembled ladies at the house of the wife of Potiphar.[1] These various incitements to delight no longer grace the forlorn kiosque, and perhaps their disappearance is no great loss to the world of art. The original decoration, which is quite intact, upon the walls and ceiling enables us to judge how great had been the artistic decadence of Persia since her painters displayed their skill upon the walls of the Chehel Situn, the noble pavilion on the banks of the Zenda Rud.

Mosque of the fortress.

From this kiosque we may make our way to the adjoining mosque of the fortress, which is now no longer frequented by the faithful. It stands a little east of the old palace; the interior beneath the spacious dome is decorated with much skill by means of little bricks of many colours. The great court is already ruinous. An old henna-stained attendant informed us that it was erected in the reign of Fath Ali Shah and that it was known as the Abbas Mirza Jami. Walls and palace and mosque are, I conclude, already doomed. Hard by their crumbling remains are seen the barracks of the Russian garrison and the metal roof of a Russian church. The last of the sirdars is already long since dead, he whose portrait hangs on the wall of the pavilion. He died in a miserable stable, bereft of everything but the squalid garment which clothed his aged body. Yet his memory is pleasantly associated with one of

[1] Dubois, *ibid.* pp. 339 *seq.* and Atlas.

the favourite episodes of Persian romance. It is related that a young Georgian travelled to this fortress above the Zanga to catch a glimpse of his betrothed in the sirdar's harem. The girl, espying her lover, precipitated herself towards him from the window, and was saved from certain death by a willow which broke her fall. The pair were captured; but the incident touched the heart of her jealous owner, who pardoned them both and let them go. His generous speech has been preserved: "Hearts so closely united let no man endeavour to part."[1]

Perhaps the best introduction to the population of a city consists in a visit to the schools. Erivan is better supplied in respect both of elementary and secondary education than any other town in the Armenian provinces of the Russian Empire. But, before recording my personal impressions of what I saw during a brief inspection, I should like to review the conditions which govern the schools. When Russia became mistress of a large portion of Armenia, her rulers found that their Armenian subjects were already in possession of a school system of which, with their customary tenacity, they were extremely jealous, and which probably dated from the invention of the Armenian alphabet as early as the fifth century. The Church has been for long ages the pillar of Armenian nationality; and the schools were affiliated to the Church. There were not therefore wanting all the elements of a bitter quarrel; and if any question more than another has envenomed the relations between the Armenians and their Russian rulers it is this question of the schools.

When the constitution of the Armenian Church and its relations to the Government were embodied in a State document, a chapter was inserted by virtue of which the Tsar of Russia formally recognised the Church schools.[2] They were stated to have as their object the religious and moral education of the children, and to be under the guidance and supervision of the bishops. It was provided that their rules and curricula should be submitted to the synod at Edgmiatsin, and that this body should in turn transmit them for acceptance to the Minister of the Interior. A rider was added to the effect that it was a matter of importance that the clergy should become acquainted with the Russian language, and with the history and geography of the Russian Empire.

[1] Dubois, *ibid.* p. 346, and Morier, *Hajji Baba.*
[2] Chapter viii. of the *Polojenye* of 1836.

It is only fair to the Government to remark, by way of parenthesis, that although a period of over half a century has elapsed since the promulgation of this document, few teachers and still fewer pupils have yet displayed even moderate proficiency in the speaking and writing of Russian. With the growth of material prosperity, which was the outcome of the Russian occupation, the Armenian schools prospered and their standards rose. The teachers, who were laymen, were taken from good families; and one may safely assert that at the present day the Armenian youth are instructed by the best educated and best informed among their countrymen. Many of them have studied in Europe, principally in Germany, and are men of far higher attainments in the field of knowledge than such as might be required by the teaching which they are permitted to dispense. The first step taken by Government to cut the wings of the national schools was the limitation of the standard of instruction. The class is in Russia the measure of this standard, the first class standing at the bottom of the scale. Schools of five classes were frequently attached to the churches; and the scholars who desired to pursue their studies still further passed to the so-called seminary of the diocese in which they lived. In this manner it was possible for a youth to receive all but the highest university education in his native language and through his native institutions. It is true that the Minister of the Interior had a right of censorship; but in view of the gravity of the fancied danger this safeguard was only partial. So the Government drew the pen through the third, fourth, and fifth classes and left the Armenians nothing more than the elementary course. Such action was thought to be arbitrary in view of the fact that these schools are supported by purely voluntary contributions.

Empire! what insidious wickedness, surpassing the horrors of war, is committed in the name of empire! Surely it is a right as elementary as that of security for life and property to supervise the education of your children. One might sympathise with the Russian Government had they merely required that the standard of instruction should not fall below the standard of schools in Russia. Nor should we be inclined to withhold our sympathy if they had only renewed their insistence upon the necessity of a knowledge of Russian. That was the wise as well as the humane policy. The ukase of 1884 was conceived in a very different spirit, and may be branded as an infamous document. It pro-

vided that Church schools with more than two classes should be placed upon the same basis as private schools in Russia, that is to say that the whole of the instruction should be conducted in the Russian language. This was tantamount to closing such schools. The supreme control of the elementary schools was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Department of Education. The seminaries were suffered to exist upon the basis of the decree of 1836, but their object was defined to be the preparation of clergymen to meet the requirements of the Armenian Church.

The synod at Edgmiatsin, although already placed in leading strings by Government, did not see their way to accept this decree. They urged that, since it had been issued during a vacancy of the Chair, its consideration should be postponed until the election of a new katholikos. Government retaliated by closing the schools. Nor were they again opened until in 1886 the pontiff Makar signified his consent to the provisions of the ukase, subject to some small concession as to the scope of the curricula in schools of two classes. The higher classes remained closed. Such was the situation at the time of my visit. It had, however, been further enacted that after the lapse of a prescribed period every teacher in an Armenian school should be required to possess a certificate from the Russian Department of Education. In order to obtain this certificate the candidate must pass an examination conducted in the Russian language. The term of grace was coming to an end in a few months, and I gathered that few teachers had acquired the necessary linguistic proficiency.[1]

Education is not a department of human activity which can be properly conducted upon military principles. The only discipline healthy for the mind is that which is derived from the unfettered exercise of the faculties with which it has been endowed. In Erivan I had occasion to remark the contrast in intellectual atmosphere between the Russian and the Armenian school. Here were offered two typical examples of these diverse species, still existing side by side. As the capital of a diocese, the Church has still the right to possess a seminary in the town of Erivan. The seminary embraces the standards which we may call secondary education, and has no less than six classes. It has contrived to evade the restrictions which are in the spirit of the ukase of 1884

[1] I was informed by a competent authority that, including Tiflis and the whole of Russian Transcaucasia, there were not less than 400 Armenian schools in existence at the time of my visit. About one-third of the number would be schools for girls.

in respect of the character of its pupils. It was quite obvious that very few were destined to take orders, although perhaps the majority of the 360 scholars were included in the elementary classes. There was no trace of any clerical bias in the choice of treatises; and the teachers in secular subjects were, I believe, all laymen. One at least was a young man of exceptional ability, trained in Europe at his own expense. It would be difficult to find among the staff of our secondary schools a master better equipped for his task. The pupils, whose age extended from ten to twenty years, did not appear to acquire knowledge by rote. The Principal spoke the German language fluently and was in touch with the thought of the West. Yet even this privileged institution has been clipped of much of its usefulness by being placed at an unfair advantage as compared to the Russian school. It is interdicted the seventh and eighth classes, although there can be no doubt in respect of the competency of its staff. It is perhaps for this reason that it is not as a rule attended by sons of the richest citizens. Its income of £1800 a year is principally subscribed by Armenians of means. Only about a sixth of the sum comes from the pupils. The majority receive their education free of charge.

The subjects taught in the highest class are theology and psychology, mathematics, physics, logic, modern history and modern languages. In the latter category they are restricted by order to Russian and French. The instruction is conducted in Armenian except in the case of Russian language and literature, when the Russian tongue is used. Their text-book in psychology was a Russian translation of Alexander Bain and in logic of W. S. Jevons. Besides this seminary, which is attached to the church of Surb Sargis, there is a school for girls with 200 pupils.

The Russian school is mainly supported by the State out of revenues derived from taxation. It has the rank and is known by the name of a *gymnasium* in the German acceptation of that term. Its subvention produces a yearly income of £4500, which is supplemented by the fees paid by nine-tenths of the scholars, amounting to about £4 a head. Out of 260 boys and youths some 26 were boarders and the rest day pupils. The boarders sleep in a long dormitory, kept scrupulously clean and neat. The majority pay for their maintenance £25 a year; the poorer can only afford £15. The school is housed in a commodious building in the centre of the town and exhibits every sign of prosperity. It has

large and well-furnished reception rooms for days of fête. The class rooms, with their rows of forms and large black-boards, inspire a salutary awe. The library is well stocked and does the Russian Director great credit, as does the general organisation of the institution.

But the spirit of the place is that of the camp; the methods are purely military, and one almost expects the sound of a bugle to announce which lesson shall be rehearsed. Since human memory is of brief span and the recollection of facts is of no great value, it is not so much this faculty that requires cultivation as the habit of study and the power to collate facts. The education dispensed by this school will not produce scholars or thinkers; indeed the pen is here the servant of the sword. But at least it serves to sharpen the wits, and to induce a nimbleness of mind which can scarcely fail to be of use to its Mohammedan members.

All who can afford to buy a uniform appear in trousers and tunic of blue cloth, enlivened with brass buttons. A dress of similar material is worn by the ushers. The pupils are drilled and put through simple military exercises; they may be seen marching with music at their head. Yet this is a civil institution. It is the only *gymnasium* or High School in the Russian provinces of the Armenian plateau. At the time of my visit the school list contained the names of 159 Armenians, 67 Russians, 9 Georgians, 7 Poles and 18 Tartars. Only the last belonged to the Mohammedan religion.

When it is remembered that the Tartars compose one-half of the inhabitants and are numerous in the districts about Erivan, the poor show which they make among the inmates of this important school is a very significant fact. As a body, they shut themselves off from Western education; and for this reason they appear destined to be edged out by the Armenians, as a species unable to adapt itself to the new environment. They are still in possession of some of the richest land in the province, and many among them are wealthy men of leisure. These khans occasionally send a son to the school. But the Director informed me that youths of this class were rarely successful; they were indolent and left at an early age. Those who belonged to the middle class stayed longer and were much more hopeful. Although I passed through every room while the students were pursuing their tasks, I only counted six Tartars, all told. The method of procedure was extremely entertaining. Accompanied by the amiable Director,

I was introduced to the presiding usher, who would descend from his daïs and extend his hand. Some fifty to a hundred bright black eyes were focussed upon us; all were standing, not a muscle moved and not a sound was heard. Then some such little comedy as this would be gone through:—

The Director (addressing myself in German). "This is the Latin class. Permit me to present you to M. —off. (In Russian) Pupils, you may sit down (a single clap and shuffle—perfect silence). You, Sir, will please address the Professor in the Latin tongue."

Myself (after a long and embarrassed pause). "Gratias ago; clementiam, benigne rector, reposco. Consuetudinem linguæ Latinæ parum conservo. Verum versus video in nigra ista tabula inscriptos, mihi valde familiares: 'O utinam tunc quum Lacedæmona classe petebat, obrutus insanis esset adulter aquis.' Vellem interrogare discipulos quisnam ille fuerit adulter."

The Usher (a forlorn and crushed individual. At first listless; but he encounters the flashing eyes of the little Director, and stammers). "Sv . . . svit . . . niet, niet . . ." (and he proceeds in Russian).

The Director. "My colleague desires me to state that he quite understands what you said. You wished to express admiration of our new blackboards. I thank you in his and my name. Is there any question you would like to put?"

Myself. "There appear to be about thirty boys in this class. I wonder what proportion Tartars bear to Armenians among them."

The Director. "Russians, stand up!" (some four or five fair-haired and closely-cropped youths rise in their places. Their faces show intelligence, and one likes them)—"Armenians, stand up!" (the first batch sit down; practically the whole class springs to its feet)—"Tartars, stand up!" (one little boy at the extreme end of the class confronts his seated schoolmates).

One feature of this institution seemed specially well conceived; it was the manner in which the religious difficulty was solved. Two different religions—the Mohammedan and the Christian—and three distinct professions of the latter—the Gregorian Armenian, Roman Catholic (Poles), and so-called Russian Orthodox—were represented among the pupils and were expounded to their several votaries by as many diverse types of the holders of sacerdotal office. Separate rooms were set aside in which the

mollah taught Islam, and the papa or padre or vardapet explained the New Testament. In this manner each youth received instruction in the faith of his fathers at the hands of one of its official exponents; while the rub and wear of continual intercourse in the secular classes accustomed Mohammedan and Christian, Russian Orthodox and Gregorian Armenian to respect their classmates and to tolerate each other's faith. The extension of such a system over the whole of these provinces would be likely to work incalculable good; and, side by side with glaring defects in the methods of secular instruction, it is a real pleasure to be able to congratulate the State schools upon such a salutary feature and cordially to wish them success.

The Tartars of Erivan are for the most part of Turkish descent, and of kindred race to the bulk of the inhabitants of the neighbouring Persian province of Azerbaijan. But some of the number included under this name in the statistics may more properly be designated as Persians. All profess the Shiah tenets. I had expected to find them extremely fanatical, judging by my experience of their co-religionists in Persia, and by an account given of them by a French traveller.[1] But not only are Christians permitted to enter their mosques; they are even received with cordiality by the groups assembled in the outer courts. I do not know whether this altered demeanour may be due to a policy of *no nonsense* pursued by the Russian Government. If such be the case it is a significant fact. How often have I stood before the door of a mosque in Persia, casting eager glances at the vista of priceless treasures within! On each occasion I have in vain appealed to the Governor, who would urge that he could not be responsible for my safety, and beg me not to attempt to enter. At Erivan I was invited to penetrate into every part, and to stand by the side of the faithful while they prayed. I have already stated that the Tartar inhabitants include many men of means, who live on the proceeds of their extensive gardens. But a good

[1] Müller-Simonis (*Du Caucase au Golfe Persique*, Paris, 1892, p. 62), speaking of the celebration of the ceremonies in honour of Ali and Hoseyn at Erivan, says: "Le soir les fanatiques qui devront représenter les martyres à la grande procession, font une promenade aux flambeaux, armés de sabres et de gourdins. Ils agitent en mesure leurs flambeaux et leurs armes, criant en même temps à tue-tête: 'Hussein, Ali, Hussein, Ali.' Les reflets rouges des torches, ici découpant les blanches silhouettes des maisons, là plongeant en lueurs étranges sous la verdure des arbres, puis éclairant en plein les figures hideuses de ces dévots, forment un spectacle sauvage et fantastique." The picture is true to life. I have little doubt that such a procession may still be witnessed at Erivan.

proportion of the large shop-keepers belong to this race, and are well-mannered and fairly well-educated men. I fancy, however, that they would scarcely be able to compete with the Armenians, were it not for the support of patrons of their own blood. For the rest, the small hucksters and the sellers of fruit are in a very large proportion Tartar. So, almost exclusively, are the workers in mud after their various kinds: plasterers, embankers, makers of ducts to water the gardens. The gardeners and drivers of carts largely belong to this nation; but there is scarcely a carpenter or a skilled mason who is not an Armenian.

While the Tartars are reputed to hoard, the Armenians are excessively lavish, and spend large sums in building themselves fine houses. Many an ornate villa in Italian style may be seen emerging from the foliage of the gardens. Here and there quite a little palace faces the street. Yet, with all their comparative wealth, they have not yet emerged from the material stage, and I searched in vain for a bookseller. Indeed, in spite of many signs of progress and of her favourable geographical position, Erivan can scarcely yet be said to be connected with the pulse of the great world. Here is a city not so far from Europe, and needing capital for her development; yet scarcely any capital has found its way in. Teheran, although much more distant, has a numerous European colony; and there is not an enterprise, from banks to electric lighting and tramways, which a number of candidates are not contending with each other to supply. You will not meet a single foreign industrialist in Erivan, nor be able to purchase any but Russian newspapers. Even the Armenians are not encouraged to develop the resources of the country. The following question which I addressed to a prominent Armenian capitalist may exhibit, together with the answer, the magnitude of those resources and the reasons assigned for the fact that they are not exploited.

Q. "Can you explain to me why so little use is made of your natural advantages—the immense extent of idle soil and the abundance of water? In the north you have the vast reservoir of Lake Sevan; in the south the Araxes, running in full stream to the Caspian Sea. Cultivation might surely be increased to many times its present area without any great expense."

A. "The waste lands are for the most part in the hands of the Russian Government, and they are not inclined to sell or lease them to Armenians. They are believed to be keeping them for Russians, but the Russians do not come. A successful piece of

reclamation has been made by General Cheremetieff in the neighbourhood of Ararat. We have made repeated proposals to take lands and irrigate them, but we have never been able to obtain permission."

Perhaps, if these lines come to the eyes of M. Witte, he will give the matter the attention which it deserves.

The same exclusive economical policy, as manifested in protective duties, has deflected commerce from the natural avenue of the valley of the Araxes, and caused it to pursue more lengthy and less convenient routes. There is scarcely any transit trade with Persia. The prosperity of the place is therefore dependent on native industries, which comprise the cultivation and export of cotton, wine and rice. Cotton to the value of about £400,000 is annually despatched by waggon or camel to the station of Akstafa on the Tiflis railway, and thence, viâ Batum and the Black Sea or Baku and the Caspian, to the manufacturing centres of Russia. Three large Russian firms are locally represented by offices and factories, where the cotton is purchased and cleaned and pressed. The presses, which are of English make, are driven by horse power. While this industry is in the hands of Russians the trade in wine is conducted by Armenians; and very excellent wine have they succeeded in producing. The value of the yearly export, which goes exclusively to Russia, is as yet only £20,000. But the enterprise of M. Karapet Afrikean, who has closely studied his subject in Germany, has already effected a marked improvement in the quality of the wine, and is likely to lead to a great increase in the demand. Rice is also exported and in considerable quantities to Erzerum and the Turkish provinces. The fruits of Erivan are almost unrivalled in the world; but I do not know that they are preserved and sent away.

Such is the city which, with its vast and populous province, absorbs all the time and all the energies of its Russian governor, sitting at his green baize table overlooking the park. General Frese has a real affection for that table, which he has shaped to fit his figure. From early morning to late night his erect and military form is condemned to that inactive but rigid posture. He never indulges in the relaxation of an arm-chair. While you puff your cigarette among his hospitable cushions, he will discourse upon the mighty rivers and forests of Siberia from across the field of green baize. Dinner is served in a room displaying all the skill of Persian artists, and overlooking, through a window

composed of tiny panes of glass, a miniature garden disposed as for the stage of a theatre. I need hardly say that this work of fancy was not created by the order of the present occupant of Government House. Still the fare at his table is worthy of the most refined palate; such excellent trout and tender chickens and the pick of the native wine! Immediately after the meal he resumes his seat in the adjoining room behind the green baize. He attributes the backwardness of the country to excessive centralisation at St. Petersburg, a process which has been tending to assume increasing proportions now that the Caucasus is no longer administered by a Grand Duke.

CHAPTER XVI

EDGMIATSIN AND THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

At five o'clock in the afternoon of the 4th of October we set out for Edgmiatsin. It is a drive of about thirteen miles across the plain. Our luggage was consigned to a waggon of the post, and we ourselves enjoyed the luxury of a light victoria, drawn by four horses abreast. They covered the distance in an hour and forty minutes, although the road is in many places a mere track.

What a drive! It is so well within reach of Europe that it ought to be included, like the journey to Italy, in the programme of a liberal education. The railway will before long arrive at Erivan, and then the pilgrimage will be still easier to undertake. Not all the tourists in the world will disturb the harmony of this landscape; the screeching trains, the loud hotels, the Babel of tongues will be lost, like a flight of starlings, in this expanse. It is here that the spirit of Asia is most intensely present—an inner sanctuary to those outer courts through which the traveller may have wandered and never crossed the threshold of this plain. And it is a spirit and an influence which arouse deep chords within us and send them sounding through our lives.

The landscape at once combines and accentuates the salient features of the Asiatic highlands. There is the plain which was once the bed of an inland sea. It stretches west and east without visible limits; and this evening it has all the appearance of water. In the west it is mirage which produces this effect. The long north-western slope of the Ararat fabric assumes the character of a dark and narrow promontory rising on an opposite shore. From the east, beyond the train of the Little Ararat, a cold mist—may it be from the Caspian?—is slowly wafted over the steppe, and the illusion is complete. Into those liquid spaces sweep the basal vaultings of Alagöz—the boulder-strewn declivi-

ties which we keep on our right hand, and which seem to embody on a typical scale that quality of hopeless sterility which is characteristic of vast portions of the continent. But the same vague distance receives the Zanga, diffused into many channels, and lost beneath luxuriant foliage. For over a quarter of an hour after leaving Erivan we pass at a rapid trot between the walls of orchards; and in places the water gushes from the conduits across the road. Once outside this intricate zone the track wanders over the idle soil, skirting the stony slopes in the north. In the opposite direction the plain blooms with fields of cotton and rice, sustained by a small canal which pursues a westerly course before it falls into the Araxes, if indeed it flow so far.

And there are the mountains of Asia—the volcanoes with their vaulted summits, as well as those long ridges with their serrated outline which represent the operation of less impetuous forces through longer spaces of time. To this second category belongs the fine chain on the west of Ararat which gains in definition as we proceed. It stands a little back and behind the fabric of Ararat, and volcanoes too have built themselves up upon this wall. But its rugged and tumbled appearance is the feature which predominates, in striking contrast to the symmetry of the mountain of the Ark. That giant overpowers the lesser Ararat and appropriates their common base. One stands in wonder at the force which could have rent that massive pedestal and opened the yawning chasm which fronts the plain. Night creeps into those recesses, where the blaze of a Kurdish camp-fire calls attention to the extraordinary transparence of the air. The snow-fields, bare and cold above the amber of the sunset, are already free of their coronal of cloud. One full-puffed vapour still floats behind the uppermost pinnacle; another clings to the bastion on the north-west. While we admire this stately scene, made more impressive by the heavy silence, a grove of trees rises from the steppe on our point of course. Two little conical shapes just emerge above their outline, and are recognised as the domes of Edgmiatsin.

We pass through the thin plantation, sustained by runnels derived from Alagoz, and come to a halt before the doorway of a lofty mud wall with round towers at intervals. It might belong to a Persian fortress; but it is the outer wall which surrounds the cloister with the cathedral of St. Gregory. The massive gate is

closed, and we thump and thump for some time in vain. The parapet with its crumbling surface betrays no sign of the life within. But there is just sufficient light to reveal the surroundings of the fortified enclosure—a straggling village of above-ground houses, outlying churches, poplars, dust.[1]

At last the hinges creak and the porter appears. We are ushered into a court, like that of a college at Cambridge, adjoining the great gate which is in the south wall. It is known



FIG. 47. PILGRIMS' COURT, EDGMIATSIN.

as the pilgrims' court (Fig. 47). Low buildings, rudely built, with a continuous wooden verandah, compose the quadrangle. The windows are all lit up behind a line of young trees of which the foliage rustles in the night air. Several figures may be discerned on the steps of a basin of water in the centre of the court. The place is all bustle and stir. Every room, so we are told, in the whole monastery is occupied by as many people as it will hold. Quarters have been reserved for us in the principal court; but we are not expected until to-morrow. Sooner than

[1] According to Dubois de Montpéreux the fortifications of Edgmiatsin were restored by the Katholikos Simeon between 1763 and 1780 (*Voyage autour du Caucase*, Paris, 1839-43, vol. iii. p. 360).

disturb the peace of evening we retire to a room in the village where we erect our camp beds. It is quite a dormitory. My immediate neighbour speaks English and is a correspondent of the *Daily News*. He is an Armenian gentleman who has come all the way from Tabriz, partly in the capacity of delegate of his countrymen in the Persian city, and partly as the representative of the London newspaper. He talks incessantly; his companions do the same. The great event of the coming days will form an epoch in their lives, and every incident will be indelibly imprinted upon their memories. A thrilling and detailed narrative will be despatched to London, where it will filter through the brain of the sub-editor and issue in the form of a paragraph in small type.

But the newspaper will be to blame; for it is an event, this consecration of the latest pontiff of the Armenian Church. It is an event both by reason of the personality of the new katholikos and because within recent years the fact has slowly dawned upon Europe that the politics of Western Asia must react upon the Western peoples, and that in those politics the Armenians are destined to play a part. The Church is at the present day the only native institution which has been preserved to that people. All their aspirations as human beings desirous to live as human beings are focussed by that single organisation. The broad democratic basis upon which reposes the election of the patriarch invests him with a representative character. Moreover he is not chosen by a section of his countrymen but by the nation as a whole. The Armenians of Turkey and of Persia as well as those within Russian territory contribute their suffrages. It is therefore only natural that, in the absence of secular institutions, the head of the Church should be much more than a merely spiritual ruler, and should reflect and in no small measure be expected to instruct the temporal hopes and fears of his flock.

The Russian Government have not been slow in recognising this fact; nor does the anxiety with which it is regarded in official circles date from the contemporary prominence of the Armenian Question. In the heyday of their relations with this Christian nation which hailed them as liberators, and which was placed in the very centre of the Mussulman peoples over which they were slowly establishing their sway, the Russians lavished favours upon Edgmiatsin;[1] and rightly or wrongly they are now

[1] The true inwardness of this policy did not escape the notice of the French traveller Boré, who, writing in 1838, says: "En s'avançant vers l'Asie Centrale la Russie

accused by their Armenian allies, become their subjects, of having excited hopes which, when they had served the ends of Russian policy, were rudely and almost brutally suppressed. It is certain that the Armenian inhabitants of the provinces which now belong to Russia favoured the Russians in their campaigns against Persia and Turkey at the risk of reprisals on the part of their Mussulman masters. They smoothed the way for the extension of the Russian Empire from the valley of the Kur to that of the Araxes. The first great step in this direction was effected at the commencement of the present century, when the kingdom of Georgia was organised into a Russian province. The acquisition of Georgia afforded the Russians a foothold upon the tableland, and brought them into direct contact with the Persians and with the Turks. Their first battle against the Persians was fought on the 20th of June 1804, and resulted in the repulse of the Shah's forces, which were led by his son, the famous Abbas Mirza. This action took place in the immediate neighbourhood of Edgmiatsin, and on the same day upon which was celebrated the annual festival of St. Ripsime, one of the saints who are the special glory of the cloister. The Armenians did not disguise the direction of their sympathies, and attributed the Russian victory to the intervention of their Saint.[1] Ten years later, when the monastery was visited by Morier, the patriarch was wearing a high Russian order, of which the star glittered on his purple robe.[2]

cherchait à réaliser une pensée politique habilement conçue, qui lui promet pour l'avenir des résultats avantageux. Comme puissance chrétienne, elle se déclare la protectrice de tous les chrétiens assujétis à la double puissance Mahométane qu'elle combattait. . . . Voilà pourquoi l'on tenait beaucoup encore à enclaver dans l'empire le monastère d'Echemiazin ; attendu qu'étant le siége du chef principal de la communion arménienne, on devait tenir dans les liens de son pouvoir spirituel la majeure partie des Arméniens répandus dans les royaumes limitrophes" (*Correspondance et Mémoires*, Paris, 1840, vol. ii. pp. 36, 37).

[1] Monteith, *Kars and Erzerum*, London, 1856, p. 38. During the campaigns against Persia the convent of Edgmiatsin obtained declarations from both belligerents that their territory should be considered neutral ground. The Russians, however, appear to have made use of it as a base (*ibid.* p. 133). While at Edgmiatsin I was told that in 1804 the Persians erected a battery upon the roof, which naturally suffered, although I am not aware that the Russians came to any harm from the battery.

[2] Morier's *Second Journey*, London, 1818, pp. 323 *seq.* According to Von Haxthausen Russian influence had already become preponderant in the election of a katholikos as early as 1768, when the Katholikos Lukas sought and obtained the sanction of Russia upon his elevation (*Transcaucasia*, English edition, London, 1854, p. 307). We learn from another source that the Katholikos Ephraim (1809-31) was accorded the special protection of the Tsar, and that he did not assume his functions before receiving the imperial assurance at St. Petersburg that the pontificate of Armenia would ever receive such protection. This same Tsar, Alexander I., loaded the bishops

In 1828 Edgmiatsin was annexed to Russia after the capture of Erivan from the Persians and as a result of the Treaty of Turkomanchai. Throughout the wars which ensued with Turkey the Armenians espoused the Russian cause; and one cannot doubt that their assistance was of considerable benefit both to Paskevich during the campaigns of 1828-29, and to Loris Melikoff, himself of Armenian origin, in that of 1877.[1] Little by little a certain bitterness becomes appreciable in these honeymoon relations. The origin or perhaps the reflection of this new feeling may be found in the provisions of the important statute which defines the status of the Armenian Church in Russia and regulates the constitution of Edgmiatsin. This statute, which is generally known as the *Polojenye*, is headed by the signature of the Tsar Nicholas and bears the date of March 1836. It was translated for me by one of the monks. In some respects it deals most liberally with the national Church. Her congregations are accorded full liberty of worship, and her clergy are relieved from all civil burdens. The principle of the election of the Katholikos by the whole Armenian people professing the national religion is expressly recognised. The method of his election is minutely prescribed. The national delegates assemble in the church of St. Gregory, and submit two names to the Emperor, who makes the appointment.[2] On the other hand, in

and priests who accompanied Ephraim with honours and presents (*Avdall's continuation of Chamchean's History*, Calcutta, 1827, pp. 519-20).

[1] Melikoff is said to have had under his command a body of 2000 Armenian volunteers as well as some 400 officers of the same nationality. See the *Reminiscences of a Delegate to the Congress of Berlin* in the newspaper L'Arménie for 15th August 1892 (published in London).

[2] Nine articles of the *Polojenye* deal with the election of a katholikos. Upon a vacancy of the Chair it is the duty of the synod to issue invitations to all Armenian dioceses, whether in Russia or elsewhere, calling upon them each to name two deputies, one clerical and one lay, who shall repair to Edgmiatsin after the lapse of a year. These deputies, should they be unable to attend in person, may signify their vote by letter. In addition to the deputies the members of the synod and seven of the oldest bishops of Edgmiatsin have votes *ex officio*. The election takes place in the church of the Illuminator. Four candidates are chosen by vote in the first place. A second ballot narrows the selection to two. The assembly then appoints three delegates who repair to the Governor-General of the Caucasus and officially communicate the result. The Governor-General transmits the two names to the Emperor through the Minister of the Interior. The Emperor confirms the katholikos and gives him the ukase. After he has taken the oath of allegiance to the Russian throne he is consecrated according to the rite of the Armenian Church.

In Russia there are at present only six dioceses of the Armenian Church; they are specified in the *Polojenye*. They are:—1. New Nakhichevan and Bessarabia; 2. Astrakhan; 3. Erivan; 4. Tiflis; 5. Karabagh; 6. Shirvan. Kars is at present a vicarate, dependent upon Erivan. In Turkey there are, I am informed, usually no less than fifty-two dioceses: but there are not always bishops to every diocese. In Persia

true Russian fashion, what is given with one hand is taken away with the other. The synod of Edgmiatsin is an ancient institution which, according to Armenian traditions, advises the katholikos, and may even resist him should he desire to effect changes in matters intimately affecting the national faith.[1] The *Polojenye* emphasises and develops the constitutional importance of this body, and places it under the titular presidency of the Emperor. The decrees of the synod are headed "By order of the Emperor of Russia"; and they are submitted to a Russian procurator, resident at Edgmiatsin, who examines into their validity. In matters of a purely spiritual nature the katholikos takes counsel with the synod, but need not necessarily accept its recommendations. But in all the general business of the Church, as well as of the cloister, it is the synod which has jurisdiction subject to the approval of the Minister of the Interior. In the synod, which consists of eight priests resident at Edgmiatsin, the katholikos has no more than a casting vote. It is true that he might act by Bull. But such action, were it contrary to the resolutions of the synod, would, as matters now stand, be revolutionary. In this manner the katholikos is put into leading strings, of which the ends are held by the officials on the banks of the Neva, duly instructed by a professed and resident spy.

there are two, namely New Julfa and Tabriz. It will thus be seen that the Armenians of Turkey have the preponderant vote, and that the clergy have a small majority over the lay members, to the extent of the synod and seven of the bishops of Edgmiatsin.

At the last election, which took place on the 17th of May 1892, there were present in the church of St. Gregory 72 electors, including the synod and the 7 bishops. The number might have been about 135. But several dioceses appointed the same delegate. The vote for Mgr. Khrimean was unanimous, the second candidate being only nominal.

Other articles of the *Polojenye* to which I should like to call attention are to the following effect:—The usual Russian provision forbidding proselytising is inserted. The katholikos alone is permitted to make the holy oil. The synod is to consist of four bishops and four archimandrites, all resident at Edgmiatsin. It is to assemble at least twice a week. The katholikos is *ex officio* a member of synod and presides when he is present. It is not said whether the procurator has a right to be present at the deliberations; but the minutes and decisions must all be submitted to him. All monasteries are to be regulated according to the rule of St. Basil, and to become a monk it is necessary to obtain the sanction of the synod upon the recommendation of a bishop. A married man may become a monk if he have no children under age and if his wife agree to enter a convent. The Church schools are recognised; but their rules and curricula must be submitted to the synod. The synod must in turn submit them to the Minister of the Interior. Finally it is stated that the Armenian clergy are supported by the gifts of the Armenian people, and the nature of these gifts is specified.

[1] According to Von Haxthausen (journey in 1843) the synod took the place of the general council of the Church, which it was impossible to assemble. He adds that in 1783 the Patriarch Lukas decreed that it should not consist of fewer than seven members; in 1802 there were nine members (*Transcaucasia*, English edition, p. 305).

Nor are the remaining provisions of this double-faced instrument calculated to shed balm over the wounded dignity of the head of the Church. It is the Emperor who appoints the members of the synod, although the katholikos is entrusted with the important function of submitting two names for the Imperial choice. It is not legal for the pontiff to punish a member of the synod without the Imperial consent. The same authority is necessary should he desire to suspend a bishop. He may not leave the cloister for more than four months except with the sanction of the Tsar. When a bishopric falls vacant he submits names to the Emperor, with whom the appointment rests. Should the bishop desire to go abroad for more than four months, application must be made to the same high quarter. But perhaps the most serious because the most insidious weapon against the independence of the national Church is the provision which enacts that a year shall elapse between the death of a katholikos and the election of his successor. This clause was accepted with singular want of foresight at a time when travelling was even slower than it is at the present day, and when it was difficult to collect the delegates from Turkey and Persia within a lesser period. In practice it is not easy for the new katholikos to take up his duties until some time subsequent to his election; and, should further delay be of advantage to the Government, the Tsar can always defer confirming the choice of the representatives. Thus a vacancy in the Chair is always accompanied by a long interregnum, during which the Government plays off one party against the other, and succeeds in obtaining whatever concessions may have been resisted during the preceding pontificate.

An English traveller who visited Edgmiatsin the year after the conclusion of this enactment found the synod with its Russian procurator in full swing. The katholikos was at once reduced to a position of president of the synod, and the synod to one of subservience to Russian policy.[1] Von Haxthausen speaks of the procurator as a Russian and quite an autocrat; this was in 1843.[2] At that time the pontiff Nerses was in occupation of the Chair, and his conspicuous abilities were

[1] Captain Richard Wilbraham, *Travels*, etc., London, 1839, p. 98. At the time of his visit in 1837 the procurator was actually an Armenian, but quite Russianised.

[2] *Transcaucasia*, German edition, Leipzig, 1856, vol. i. pp. 256 *seq.*; English edition, pp. 284 *seq.* Von Haxthausen speaks of the "Grobheit des Procurators." It is only just to add that the katholikos was absent during his visit.

regarded with suspicion by the Russian authorities. His schemes for the higher education of the Armenians had come to nothing owing to Russian opposition. But the hardest blow was reserved for the year 1885, when the Katholikos Makar was appointed by the Emperor in defiance of the expressed sentiments of the delegates of the nation. It was then realised that the independence of the Church was at an end. The ukase of investiture confirmed this pessimist view. Instead of the usual wording "upon the recommendation of the Armenian people," the appointment was based "upon the recommendation of the clergy." Instead of the pictures from Armenian history which adorned the ukase of the pontiff George, Russian insignia and coats of arms enlivened the scroll. The constitutional phrase has been restored to the ukase confirming the present pontiff, but not the patriotic pictures![1]

Still, in spite of the fetters which have been imposed upon the actions of the katholikos, as much by the manner in which the *Polojenye* is worked by the Russian bureaucracy as by the provisions which that statute contains, the average Armenian and especially the lower classes are immensely interested in the event of the coming days. At Batum, at Kutais, at Alexandropol, at Erivan—wherever we have been in the society of Armenians, talk has centred upon the triumphal journey and the approaching consecration of His Holiness Mekertich Khrimean. It is not only the ancient ceremony, and it is not merely the assembling of delegates from all parts of the Armenian world that appeals to the heart of the nation. It is the personality and reputation of the man. The people forgets, but it does not change. The imagination of the race still sees in the holder of the pontifical office not alone or so much an archbishop or katholikos—the keystone of the edifice of the Church—as a high priest in the old Biblical sense. Khrimean is the ideal of a high priest. He is a figure which steps straight out from the Old

[1] I was shown the documents in the library. The method of the election of the Katholikos Makar affords great sport to the Jesuit Vernier. He hails with delight the constitution of Edgmiatsin into a state prison "où l'élu de la nation demeure sous la garde d'un geôlier Moscovite. Cet élu a fini par déplaire au despote couronné de St. Pétersbourg; le czar vient de rejeter avec mépris l'œcuménique qui avait réuni la majorité des suffrages, et de lui substituer arbitrairement un Russe qui n'a d'Arménien que le nom. *Dans quelques années de par le knout*, ce nom même disparaîtra, et *quelque pape cosaque* remplacera l'Arménien russifié et occupera à Edgmiatsin le trône de saint Grégoire. Terrible et juste vengeance de Dieu. . . ." The italics are mine (*Histoire du Patriarcat Arménien Catholique*, Paris, 1891, p. 285).

Testament with all the fire and all the poetry. At the ceremony of his consecration it seemed as if at the foot of Ararat the ancient spirit were still alive, and that the holy oil which descended upon that venerable head from the beak of the golden dove anointed a law-giver to the people who announced the Divine Word. This impression was in part derived from the Semitic cast of his features. The large brown eyes and aquiline nose above a long and full beard, are characteristics which we associate with the Jewish nation, but which are not uncommon among the Armenians. What is more rare among this people is the spirituality and refinement which is written in every line of this handsome face (Fig. 48). But the whole character of the man would seem to have been moulded upon a Biblical model rather than upon that of the Christian hierarchy. He is the tried statesman to whom the people look for guidance in the abeyance of the kingly office. With him religion and patriotism are almost interchangeable terms; and the strong reality which he has given to the old Armenian history may be illustrated by an act which those who lack sympathy with such a character might almost regard as childish. In the cloister of Varag near Van, over which he has presided for many years, are buried the remains of Senekerim, king of the Van country, who abdicated his kingdom in favour of the Byzantine emperor, Basil II., and retired to the town of Sivas in Asia Minor, which he received in exchange. Over his tomb a wooden canopy had been erected and decorated in a manner befitting royal rank. But such honours, paid to so unworthy a monarch, shocked the keen sense



FIG. 48. THE KATHOLIKOS MEKERTICH KHRIMEAN.

of the patriot in Khrimean; he stripped the frame of its trappings and ornaments, and the structure stands bare to this day. The simple surroundings among which his life has been passed recall the setting of a Bible story. At a later stage of our journey, when we arrived in the town of Van, I was shown the house where he had resided and which he has now devoted to a school for girls. As I alighted to visit the school a man with the appearance and dress of a peasant stepped forward to hold the reins of my horse. Yet this individual was none other than the nephew of the Katholikos, and the brother of Khoren Khrimean, who has accompanied his uncle to Edgmiatsin, and who does the honours of the patriarchal household with so much dignity and natural grace. During our stay in Van, his native province, we were afforded an instance of the magnetic influence which through a long life Mekertich Khrimean has exercised upon his countrymen, and which takes the form of superstitious veneration among the humble and the poor. As we were winding up the slopes of Mount Varag on our way to the ancient monastery where he lived so long, teaching in the school which he had founded within its walls, and often taking this very path from the cloister to preach in the little church of Hankusner, on the outskirts of the gardens of Van, our attention was called to a spot where an assassin had lain in wait for him, deputed by his enemies to kill him as he rode unaccompanied towards the town. The story is told that when the man perceived him and raised his rifle to his shoulder, a sudden fear seized his limbs, his arm shook like a wand; and he fell upon his knees before his victim, whose look he had been unable to bear. As a writer Khrimean has expressed through the vehicle of a prose which is full of poetry and emotion conceptions of Scripture and thoughts upon the troubles of his time which might have sprung from the warm imagination of the early Christians in the East. He has often suffered for the fire of his sermons, and he possesses both the style of the consummate orator and the personal charm which keeps an audience under a spell. He has for many years been in the forefront of the Armenian movement; and it was he who pleaded the Armenian cause at the Congress of Berlin. A people whose spirit has been crushed and whose manhood has been degraded gather new life from such a teacher and learn to become men. But perhaps the most striking quality in a character which is at once complex and clear as the light of

day is the ever-welling kindness and open-armed sympathy with which he shares the troubles of his fellow-men. As the throng press round him, the holder of their highest office, and endeavour to kiss his hand or gain a glimpse of his face, the mind travels back to that solemn scene in which the Greek king receives his stricken and distracted people: "O my poor children, known to me, not unknown is the subject of your prayer; well am I aware that you are sore afflicted all; yet, though you suffer, there is not one among you who suffers even as I. For the grief you bear comes to each one alone—himself for himself he suffers—and to none other else; but my soul mourns for the State and for myself and you." [1]

Side by side with personal relations of greater freedom than I had anticipated towards this remarkable man, there grew up at Edgmiatsin and during the course of subsequent travel a fairly intimate acquaintance with the events of his life. He was born on the 5th of April 1820; and it is therefore in his seventy-fourth year that he ascends the throne of St. Thaddeus and of St. Gregory. His father and uncle were well-to-do citizens of Van, who had come to be known under the name of Khrimean because of a trade which they had conducted with the Crimea. The young Mekertich had a single brother and no sisters; and he appears to have been educated with some care by his uncle. His youth and early manhood were devoted to secular pursuits. For five or six years he acted in the capacity of an overseer in a weaving business. But already in 1841 he had become a traveller and a thinker; in that year he made a journey in the province of Ararat and visited Edgmiatsin. At the age of twenty-five he married and in due course became a father; but his wife died after giving birth to a daughter who only lived to be six or seven years old. To a layman of intellectual tastes among the Armenians of Turkey there is scarcely any other profession open than the honourable but ill-paid calling of a teacher. Shortly after his marriage Khrimean proceeded to the capital and earned his living by private tuition. His first book appeared in 1850, and consisted of a description in poetry of his travels in Ararat. The period of his residence in Constantinople was diversified by further journeys; to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, of which he published an account; and to Cilicia, the seat of the latest Armenian dynasty, where he remained some time as

[1] Sophocles, *Œdipus Tyrannus*, l. 58.

a teacher in the convent of Sis. In 1854 he returned to his native city, and in the following year took orders and became a *vardapet* or monastic priest. It is at this date that the more conspicuous portion of his life may be said to have commenced. The pulpit gave full scope to his natural eloquence; while the qualities of the student and writer, which he had carefully cultivated, were displayed in the columns of a journal which he founded about 1856 and named the *Eagle of Vaspurakan*, or of the province of Van. The proceeds of the sale of this periodical, which was at first printed at Constantinople, whither he had returned in 1855, enabled him to purchase an instrument of great rareness in Turkey, which the Armenians prize with the same childish affection and reverence as the Persian highlanders value a rifle or sporting gun. Khrimean re-entered Van with the title of abbot of the famous monastery which overlooks the landscape of the city and the rock and the waters from the slopes of Mount Varag. He came the proud possessor of a printing press, with which to conquer the sloth of the faint-hearted among the laymen and edify the crass ignorance of the priests.

In the good old times in Turkey one might read or write what books one liked, and the freedom which was enjoyed by the average individual might have excited the envy of the citizens of some of the European states. When the abbot of Varag cast his stone into the stagnant waters, the report woke little echo beyond the borders of his native province and the ranks of his countrymen. But the waves which he set in motion have never yet subsided; and who can tell upon what shore of promise or disappointment they are destined to break and disappear? If ever there was a good cause, such was the cause which he championed, and no advocate could be more pure-minded than himself. His avowed object and real aim was the elevation of the Armenians and their preparation for the new era which he foresaw. That era he conceived as one of national activity in the rapid decline of the Mussulman peoples and the approach of new influences from the West. If we tax him with having resuscitated a realised and played-out ideal—that national ideal which is still the bane of our modern Europe, but which, except perhaps in the case of some paradoxical German Professors, has lost its hold upon educated minds, he might reply that it is the only talisman with which to touch the Armenians, the most obstinate nationalists which the world has ever seen. He might

further point to the almost hopeless condition of the Ottoman Empire, and under his breath he might suggest that the methods of Russian despotism were not such as to excite the enthusiasm of a strongly individual people capable of assimilating Western culture at first hand. Lastly, he might dwell upon the fact that the Armenians have a long history, and that their progress, to be solid and permanent, must be based on a revival of consciousness in the dignity of their past.

But the inculcation of such doctrines in the minds of his countrymen was sure to produce a ferment among a people who have been regarded as the inferiors and almost as the slaves of the Mussulmans for upwards of eight hundred years. It was imputed to him that he was working to revive the old Armenian kingdom—a consummation which a sensible Turk should regard with equanimity, since the time necessary to attain this end would far exceed all possible limits which he might assign to his solicitude for posterity. But sensible people are a minority of the inhabitants of this globe, and they are not numerous in the governing circles of the Ottoman Empire. The great activity of the Abbot of Varag, who trained his youths in the school of the cloister to conduct unaided the redoubtable magazine, slowly aroused the suspicion of the authorities. His own party in the Church supported him with much zeal, and another monastery, still more famous, that of Surb Karapet above Mush plain, was added to his spiritual administration. No sooner was he installed than a second printing press was set up and another school founded. The Armenians of the plain of Mush were edified by a new local journal, the *Little Eagle of Taron*. In 1869 he was elected Patriarch of Constantinople, a dignity which he only held for four years. The Turkish Government had become alive to his great and growing popularity, and it was found expedient that he should resign. Then came the tribulations of the Russo-Turkish war, during which the new movement among the Armenians cost them several little massacres and untoward events. When the Congress met at Berlin the ex-patriarch, who had been busy with literature, undertook, in concert with an archiepiscopal colleague, a mission on behalf of his nation to the German capital. This was his first visit to the West, and he extended his journey to Italy, France and England. The result of his efforts and of those of Nerses, Patriarch of Constantinople, was the insertion of the

well-known clause in the Treaty of Berlin pledging Europe to supervise the execution of reforms in the Asiatic provinces of Turkey inhabited by Armenians. Khrimean returned to his native country the object of the resentment of the Ottoman authorities; much of this portion of his life was spent in Van. But Armenian discontent was spreading; the alarm of Government was increasing; and in 1889 the eloquent preacher was sent to Jerusalem in honorary exile. In the month of May 1892 he was elected to the primacy of the Armenian Church. The Russian bureaucracy perhaps reflected that their safeguards at Edgmiatsin were quite sufficient to bridle the vigour of a septuagenarian. These shrewd diplomats therefore humoured the Armenians in the matter, and the election was allowed to stand. The Sultan raised difficulties about releasing the exiled prelate from his Ottoman nationality and oath of allegiance. When this objection had been overcome his consent was qualified by the condition that the katholikos-elect should not pass through Constantinople. A year elapsed in these parleyings. For two years the Armenian Church had been without a head. During that period it had been ruled by the Russian procurator. Now in the autumn the elect of the nation is at length presented to the delegates who have assembled from all parts of the Armenian world. And he comes from Russia, from the north, released from exile in Turkey at the pressing instance of the Tsar. One must admire the extraordinary cleverness of these Russian bureaucrats!

The sun was already high when we sallied forth from our lodging, having with great difficulty prepared our breakfast in the crowded room. We passed down the long and dusty street of the village, which is dignified by the historical name of Vagharshapat. Nothing remains of the capital of King Tiridates, which was built upon this site or in the immediate neighbourhood. You are shown the remains of an old bridge which spanned the Kasagh, or river of Vagharshapat, some little distance north-west of the present settlement. The river has changed its course since it was erected. But the character of the masonry is rather that which was prevalent in the Middle Ages—conglomerate piles, faced with carefully hewn and jointed blocks of stone. Several shops bestow a modern appearance upon the street, having windows and being disposed as in Europe. A commonplace edifice with many windows and standing in private grounds recalls an Institute in one of our provincial towns. It is the

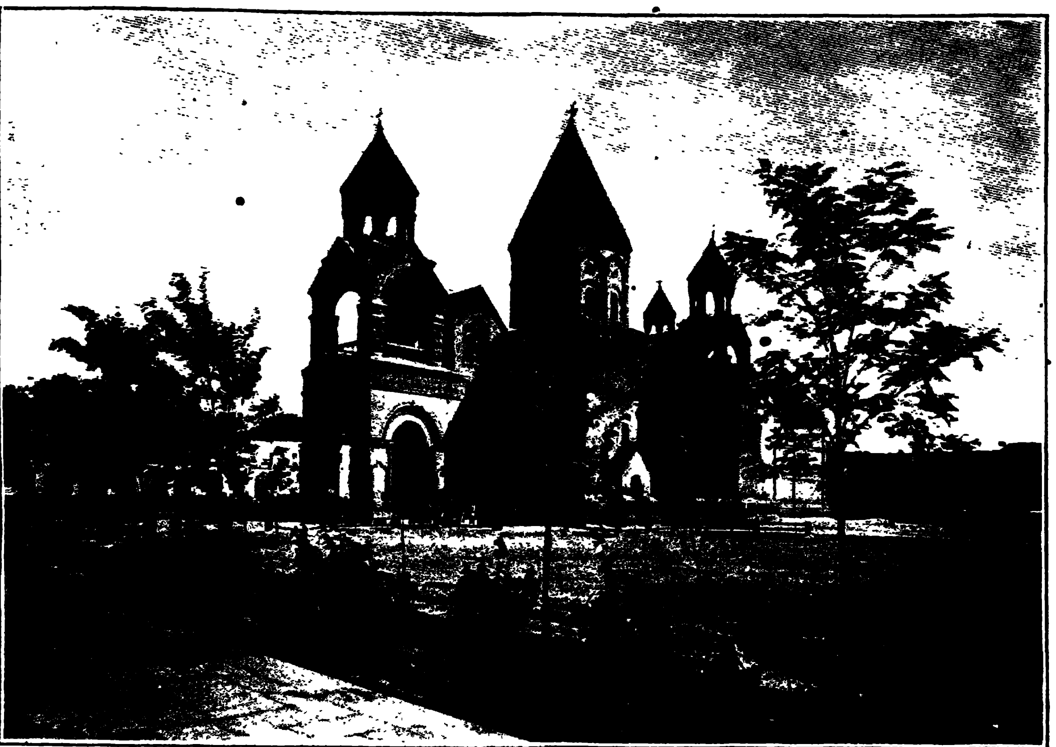


FIG. 49. EDGMIATSIN: THE GREAT COURT AND THE CATHEDRAL.

Academy or Seminary. We entered the cloister from a door on the north, through which we issued into an open space on the west of the great court. A covered way conducted us to the quadrangle, in the centre of which rises the cathedral (Fig. 49, taken from south-west).

Imagine the Old Court of Trinity College at Cambridge without the gateway, the hall and chapel, and with a church of some size placed in the centre where the fountain stands. All four sides of the figure are defined by low buildings, resembling the dwellings which constitute two sides of the Cambridge court. I had always understood that our quadrangle at Trinity was the largest in the world; although I believe some American university was building one a few inches bigger not so very long ago. But the great court of Edgmiatsin perhaps already makes the record; it has a length, from west to east, of 349 feet 6 inches, and a breadth of 335 feet 2 inches. These measurements I took myself, much to the astonishment of the crowd which assembled; they were at a loss to find a theory which might explain so strange an act. The length will be very much increased in a short while, when the condemned east side has disappeared. A fine row of stone buildings is in course of erection, which will enlarge that dimension by many yards. Our cousins across the Atlantic must bestir themselves.

The western side of the court on the south of the covered way is devoted to the residence of the Katholikos, while the block on the north of the same passage is occupied by the bishops. There is no style or pomp about the pontifical dwelling; and it would bear the same relation to the Master's Lodge at Trinity as a four-roomed cottage to a mansion. At the back is a little garden. The north side consists of the rooms inhabited by the monks, and a terrace, raised on pointed arches, extends from end to end. The building on the east is in process of demolition, and, like its fellows on the two sides which have already been described, is composed of comparatively fragile material. I was given to understand that it had once housed the seminary and printing press; a little bakery still occupies the junction with the buildings on the south. These are constructed of stone, and, although very plain, lend an air of solidity to the entire quadrangle. Beginning on the west of this block we have first a long refectory on the ground floor. Its dimensions are a length of 155 feet, and a breadth of 16 feet 6 inches. But it is a very

humble place when compared to the magnificent dining halls at Cambridge, and it is not more than 14 feet in height. The ceiling is vaulted, and like the walls is whitewashed over; the apartment is well lit and is cool in summer. Two rows of narrow tables extend down it, and on the west side is the throne and the canopy of the Katholikos, both in carved wood. Should he join the monks at dinner, his table is spread beneath the canopy. Parallel with this refectory and facing the outhouses on the south is placed a similar chamber for the servants, a part of the space upon the east being occupied by the kitchen. The storey above the refectories is tenanted by the library, while the eastern portion of the buildings is taken up by granaries and store rooms both on the ground and upper floors.

Except for the pilgrims' court, with adjacent structures, and the garden of the Katholikos—the one on the southern, the other on the south-western side—the space between the outer wall and the great court is for the most part vacant ground. What edifices there have been raised within it are of an unsubstantial character, and may have been allowed to fall into ruin. The fine sites which are thus forthcoming are being rapidly utilised, and I have already referred to the row of buildings which will extend the great court upon the east and which at the time of our visit were approaching completion. In a line with this new block, in which red and grey stones diversify the masonry, is situated further south the house which lodges the printing press, a solid stone structure. The transformation of Edgmiatsin from a residence of ignorant monks into a seat of education, the home of cultured men, is proceeding year by year; and it is even possible that the bricks and mortar, or, to speak more correctly, the excellent masonry is in advance of the needs which it is intended to supply. Wealthy Armenians are fond of endowing the famous cloister, for which they do not need the incitement of meetings at some Devonshire House. But the form of gift dearest to them is the erection of a building, which stands there so that all may see. This preference for the concrete and visible is deeply ingrained in them, and they are able to gratify it owing to the great skill of the Armenian masons. Plans were shown me which provided a palace for the Katholikos and the rebuilding of the north side of the quadrangle. These, I believe, have already been decided upon, one of our party at the private table of the Katholikos having provided the greater part of the

funds. I was also invited to look at some very elaborate drawings for the enlargement and adornment of the church. No sooner had they been handed round than one of the guests of His Holiness expressed his readiness to defray the cost. Speaking as one who came fresh to Edgmiatsin, I did my best to dissuade the acceptance of this last project. To enlarge the church would be to dwarf the fine proportions of the court; indeed the contrary course would be well-advised. One would not very much regret the abolition of the portal, while the excrescence on the east, containing the treasury and room of relics, should certainly be pulled down. His Holiness favoured the idea of erecting a new church outside the walls, to supplement the space available in the present building.

We were assigned a room in the condemned block on the east of the quadrangle, wherein we spread our rugs and erected our camp beds. It was 26 feet square, with a lofty wooden ceiling, supported by two pillars of the same material. The adjoining apartment was in process of demolition, but, although without a roof, it served admirably as a kitchen, while the flooring provided fuel for our fire. When all was in order we should not have exchanged the results of our improvisation even for the creations of the Cambridge upholsterer, mellowed in the hands of the Cambridge bedmaker; while, as for living, was it not preferable to possess the whole of our scapegrace cook than to share the services of the most virtuous of gyps? Each day as we mounted our staircase, which exactly recalled its sad Cambridge counterparts, I was struck by the resemblance of my new surroundings to those among which I had grown up in the Old Court of Trinity, with the sky and the fountain and the adjacent cloister, where the glory of the foliage and lawn and river is spread in mystery beyond the trellis screens.

Even beneath this tropical sun the mind of man has surpassed his difficulties; and just as the Cam has been converted from a melancholy ditch into a brimming waterway, threading a landscape of lawn and forest, so the Kasagh has been impressed into the service of an artificial lake, bordered by shady avenues. Extremely pleasant is the stroll round this spacious basin, which is due to the refinement of Nerses V. (1761-1857). It is situated just outside and south of the cloister; and while from one side the view discloses the dome and a cupola of the cathedral (Fig. 50), on the other it is the vault of Ararat and the pyramid

of the Lesser Ararat that are outlined above the soft foreground of water and trees (Fig. 51). It was a pleasure to instance this work to General Frese and my Russian acquaintances as bearing testimony to the sense of security inspired by Russian rule. The cloister and even the bazar are surrounded by walls worthy of a fortress, a relic from the old Persian times. The Russians appear on the scene, and the imprisoned monks disport in the open, which they make to bloom with luscious groves.

On the morning following a restful day which introduced us to our new environment I was invited to visit His Holiness. He



FIG. 50. THE LAKE AT EDGMIATSIN.

had arrived within the walls of the cloister during our sojourn on Ararat, and it appeared that he had scarcely been able to leave his apartments owing to the enthusiasm of the humbler among his admirers, who could not be restrained from pressing round him whenever he walked abroad. This enforced seclusion had developed a tendency to asthma; but with this exception I found him in excellent health. Even the garden had been invaded by the peasants, who would wait hour after hour to catch a glimpse of their *Hayrik*—a term of endearment, signifying little father, under which Khrimean is very generally known. Two footmen in scarlet robes with blue sashes stood upon the flight of steps or busied themselves with errands. I was ushered into a long apartment, modestly furnished in European style, where I

was received by an Armenian gentleman, of the handsome aquiline type of face, who addressed me in fluent English. He had been interpreter to the delegates to the Berlin Congress, and more recently had been much in the society of the Katholikos, residing at Jaffa (Jerusalem). Baron Serapion Murad—the first name is the equivalent of Mr.—holds a position of the first importance in the counsels of His Holiness at this juncture in his career. He is the shrewd man of the world, who weighs you in the balance with a single glance of his intelligent eyes. I appear to have emerged on the right side of the scale; for his formidable scrutiny rapidly relaxed into an amiable smile. We passed from

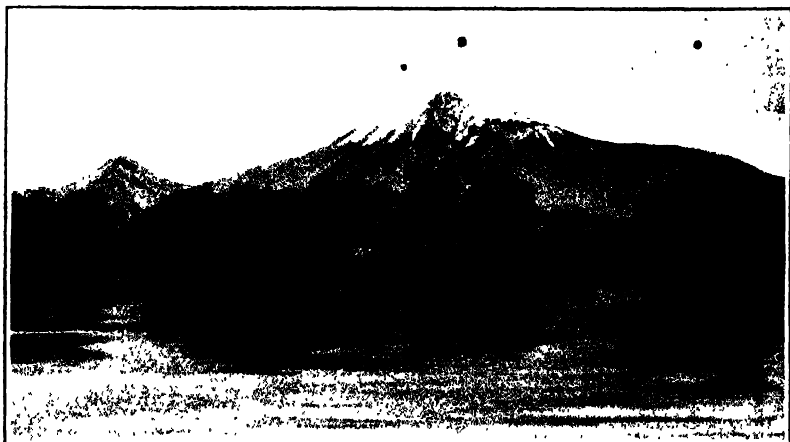


FIG. 51. ARARAT FROM THE LAKE AT EDGMIATSIN.

this outer room into a chamber with a daïs at the further side; and presently the Katholikos entered and mounted the daïs, begging us be seated on two chairs which were placed on the floor below, but quite close to his own arm-chair.

I do not remember having ever seen a more handsome and engaging face; and I experienced a thrill of pleasure at the mere fact of sitting beside him and seeing the smile, which was evidently habitual to those features, play around the limpid brown eyes. The voice too is one of great sweetness, and the manner a quiet dignity with strength behind. The footmen and the daïs and the antechamber were soon forgotten in this presence —forms necessary to little men and perhaps useful to their superiors, though they are always kicking them off when they are not stumbling among their folds. Happily the temperament

of His Holiness is averse to all baubles; the cross of diamonds was absent from his conical cowl, and his black silk robe, upon which fell a beard which was not yet white, was unrelieved by the star of his Russian order. These ornaments are strangely out of place on such a figure, and their formulas out of keeping with this character. I was closely questioned upon all the incidents of our climb on Ararat; nor was it doubted that we had reached the summit. In the old days such a pretension would have been met with a smile. Then we passed to his sojourn in England, and I asked his opinion of Mr. Gladstone, with whom he had enjoyed some intercourse. He had been impressed, like so many others, with the theological cast of that supple mind. The face contracted when we came to speak of his life in the Turkish provinces; and he laid stress upon the terrible reality of the sufferings of the Armenian inhabitants. All the struggles and hopes and anguish of his strenuous days and sleepless nights seemed to rise in the mind and choke the voice. Then he sank back, with a sigh which seemed to regret them. "I have come," he said, "to the land of Forgetfulness."—And from the quadrangle came the sound of a slowly-moving Russian anthem, and the measured step of a detachment of Russian soldiers.

His Holiness invited me to take my meals in his private dining-room, and expressed his regret that he would not be present himself. It happened to be a fast day, and nothing was offered but lentils and peas. But on the day following quite a banquet was spread before us—salmon trout from Lake Sevan, delicious *dolmas* of minced meat and rice bound together by tender cabbage leaves, and the usual not very tasty chickens. At the head of the table sat the vicar or substitute of the Katholikos, with M. Pribil on a special mission representing the Emperor on his right hand, and General Frese on his left. One or two Armenian notables were of the party, which, however, consisted for the most part of bishops resident at Edgmiatsin. All wore their black silk cowls during the meal. As one looked down the line of clerics the aquiline type of face predominated—fine human animals they seemed, with their pronounced features and limpid eyes and the long beards which keep their colour and speak of a mind at ease. One of the monks present spoke French fluently; but he had been imported from the Crimea by the present Katholikos. His name was Khoren Stephaneh. Many

a pleasant talk I had with him, but not during dinner; they have too much respect in the East for their food and cook to divert the tongue at such a time from its proper function. What little ripples of conversation diversified the natural sounds of the meal were due to that restless spirit of the West, which is always asking questions and living several hours in advance of the actually present time. I do not know that either of the high Russian functionaries were much troubled by this particular product of Western culture; but, if they were, they must have suffered from the inability of their hosts to comprehend their language. The wine of the cloister flowed freely, and was supplemented by European liqueurs. Then the restless spirit broke bounds, attacking first the taciturnity of the Governor of Erivan. The formula I had heard so often was the first to take wing; and "How long are you staying here?" came across the table in a somewhat loud voice. It was not the least unkindly meant. Next the same little sprite perched upon M. Pribil, and extracted several questions, which it let fly. When we rose from table he engaged me in a discursive conversation which ranged freely over the Armenian Question. He affirmed that the Armenians did not compose more than one-fifth of the population of the Russian provinces south of Caucasus.

The apartment was soon empty, every one retiring to their siesta; but I strolled out and made my way to the humble monastic buildings which adjoin the lonely church of Saint Gaiane. There I found a new friend whom I had learnt to value, a young monk recently ordained. Mesrop Ter-Mosesean belongs to the new school of clerics who will before long remove that stigma of crass ignorance which still attaches to the bulk of the Armenian priesthood. Men like Khrimean have long perceived that in matters of education Germany occupies the first position among the nations of the world. With greater insight than the Turks, who send their young men to Paris—the very worst school for the full-blooded Oriental—they encourage their promising scholars to study in Germany, and find the necessary funds. The monk of Gaiane had just returned from the German University, and he does credit to the solid attainments which it supplies. He is a splendid physical example of his race. Tall, with the bold features of the handsome type which I have described, with a massive forehead and teeth white as snow, he combines with these outward advantages a manner which is most

winning and a simple, straightforward character. Hours I spent in his little sitting-room during my sojourn, and I was always sorry to come away. He occupies the post of librarian at Edgmiatsin, and he is now busy with the compilation of a new and comprehensive catalogue.[1] On this occasion we walked across to the library, and found it full of people. It is entered from the side of the Katholikos' garden. I was shocked by the spectacle of valuable manuscripts lying open on a long table, and being fingered by a promiscuous crowd. Such was the license of this national festival. I noticed among them a New Testament of the tenth century, bound in richly carved ivory sides. The type and pose of the Christ in the centre of the one panel recalled that of a Roman emperor.[2] Beautiful manuscripts of the thirteenth century and a minutely illuminated missal of the seventeenth figured among the treasures which any hand was allowed to soil.

Evensong was at hand, and my companion and myself entered the dimly-lit church. The Katholikos was already seated in the throne with the canopy, attired in a rich white satin robe. The cross of diamonds flashed from his cowl. Bishops and monks composed two rows, extending to the daïs of the apse; they wore robes of yellow silk, embroidered with coloured garlands of flowers. The congregation was very numerous, but clustered in groups about the Katholikos; there was no order or assignment of places, as with us. They sat or knelt upon the floor. On either side of the lines of clerics were gathered the choir, in gorgeous dresses, holding large and cumbrous books of Armenian music. The priests conducting the service stood upon the pavement of the church with their backs to the daïs. Above them rose the shapes of crosses and gorgeous eikons, held aloft by their attendants. Incense was scattered at intervals. I noticed that His Holiness twice changed raiment, although I was at a loss to discover when and where the transformation had taken place. The strongly nasal chants hurt my unaccustomed ear, and I found it impossible to educate my sympathy into communion with this show.

An hour or two later symbols and eikons and tight little

[1] The new catalogue, which has not yet been printed [September 1900], will contain some 3500 titles. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there already exist two catalogues—(1) that published by the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 1840, and (2) that by Caréniantz, Tiflis, 1863, 4° [in Armenian].

[2] For a description of this book and its ivory panels see Strgygowski, *Das Etschmiadzin-Evangeliar*, Vienna, 1891.

formulas were all blissfully asleep; and the great court flooded over with good, healthy human spirits, released from the restraints of the day. Bonfires were lit within it, from which the leaping flames shot into the shadows of the church of the Illuminator and revealed the circles of the dancers. From many a brightly-lit room, given over to the pilgrims, came the shrill sounds of the flute and the beats of the small drum. Hài-this and Hai-that—the refrain and burden of every song celebrated the glories of the sons of Hayk. In the street of Vagharshapat our friends the musicians from Alexandropol were reaping a golden harvest. Was there ever collected together a more motley crowd? They must have come great distances. There were ladies from Akhaltsykh, with the pretty fillets across the brow; there were frock-coats and uniforms. The bright calicoes of peasant women enlivened the scene; some of the men, the poorest class, wore their rough sheepskin hats, while the better-to-do had donned low caps with a peak, like that of a naval officer. Long before midnight quiet had settled upon the great quadrangle, and nothing was heard but the plash of the fountain. But sombre patches marked the spots where whole families were encamped; while the steps all around the church and every niche and doorway were black with the forms of serried human beings in every attitude of slumber.

Next morning, the 8th of October, popular excitement was at its highest, the central event which they had come to celebrate being imminent. From the earliest dawn throngs of sheepskins and peak hats and coloured calicoes had been busy reconnoitring the most suitable positions; and, when the hour approached, all the roofs which commanded a view of the portal, and a good part of the quadrangle enjoying the same advantage, were densely packed with spectators. Rows of Russian soldiers kept clear the approaches to the western or principal entrance of the church. They wore dark green uniforms with shoulder-straps of a faded pink, and peaked caps of white canvas. Wesson and I made our way with difficulty to the residence of the Katholikos, where, in the private room of Baron Murad, we set up the camera right in face of the scene of the approaching ceremony. It had been decided to perform the rite of consecration upon a daïs in front of the portal. This improvised wooden structure was covered with carpets and costly embroideries. Over the doorway of the portal were emblazoned large Armenian letters upon a ground of cloth

or canvas. The inscription reminded us that we were assembled upon the actual site where Jesus Christ is believed to have descended from heaven. The name of the cloister and cathedral is said to signify "The Only-Begotten has descended"; and the text over the doorway may be translated "The Only-Begotten has descended from the Father, and the light of glorification with Him." Upon a higher plane, from the tower of the belfry, was suspended a banner, embroidered with the device of the Katholikos and with the eagle of Vaspurakan (Van). The device consisted of a mitre, surmounting the figures of two angels, one carrying a cross and the other a pastoral staff. These emblems crossed one another, and at the intersection was placed an ornament of diamond shape peculiar to the Katholikos. The eagle with the wings outspread was purely personal to Khrimean, recalling the many links which attach him to Van. The scroll was to the following effect:—"O God, the knower of hearts, protect for long years our chief of shepherds (*Hovapet*) Mekertich Hayrik." Left and right of the daïs, in niches of the façade of the portal, were exhibited two eikons, or religious pictures, richly framed, of which that on the left—a Virgin and Child—was a painting of very high merit, said to be of Byzantine origin.



FIG. 52. ARMENIAN NUN.

At a quarter to nine the procession is formed, and proceeds from the pontifical residence down the avenue of soldiers to the church door. The service which is held within the cathedral of the Illuminator lasts for over an hour. The party assembled in our upper chamber spend the time with conversation and in

gazing down upon the multitude. It consists of a nun from Tiflis, a frock-coated teacher in a school of that city, and a pretty woman of the rich Armenian *bourgeoisie* of Tiflis, attired in a dress of Parisian model. The nun is a charming woman, and we make great friends. She informs me that she is almost an unique specimen of her order; the convent at Tiflis is perhaps a solecism. Nunneries are not popular with the Armenians. I think my reader may appreciate the magnificent robes which belong to her office, and of which, by her kindness, I am able to supply an illustration (Fig. 52). I notice that among the women assembled in the quadrangle the Armenian national dress is not often seen. The Georgian head-dress—a band of black velvet, embroidered with beads or jewels, across the temples, and a white silk kerchief over the head—appears to predominate. This fact would show that the greater number of those present have come from Tiflis and the northern districts.

Just as we are getting a little bored with the finicking architecture of the portal there is a movement and a rustle, and the procession issues from the church. First to appear are the high Russian officials in Court dress—M. Pribil, General Frese and the rest. They take up position on the floor of the quadrangle in front of the crowd, and face the still vacant daïs. Between them and this central object room is left for the choir and deacons, who are presently introduced. Hats are doffed in spite of the fierce sun. A brief, intense pause, and the twelve bishops[1] in gorgeous attire mount the daïs from behind. They escort the venerable form of the Katholikos, over whose head two attendants support a canopy of crimson material, embroidered with gold lace. For a short space the aged patriarch fronts the multitude in a standing posture; then sinks on the carpet with his feet beneath his body in Eastern fashion. Erect beside him, a bishop reads from a heavy volume. From time to time you detect a movement of the deeply-bowed head of the seated figure, as a particular passage is recited. Next a bishop advances, bearing in his hands the image of a dove, wrought in gold. It is the receptacle of the holy oil. In the southern apse of the cathedral stands a chest containing a vase, in which is preserved

[1] The institution of the twelve bishops, who reside in the palace of the katholikos and fulfil various offices about his person, dates from the commencement of the Armenian State Church. See *Faustus of Byzantium*, vi. 5, and Gelzer (*Die Anfänge der Armenischen Kirche*, in *Berichte der K. S. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzic*, Phil.-Hist. Classe, 1895).

oil blessed by St. Gregory. It is nothing, they say, but a mass of dry material. Of this substance they take a pinch and mix it with consecrated oil, specially prepared and scented with essence of flowers. Such is the liquid which is allowed to flow from the beak of the dove upon the head of the father of the nation. The bishops gather round, and each with his thumb spreads the oil over the scalp, making the figure of a cross at the same time (Fig. 53). Then a mass of wool is applied to the crown of the head, in the folds of a muslin veil which is adjusted to fall over the face. The Katholikos rises after a brief interval, places his feet in his embroidered slippers and with the bishops re-enters the church. The ceremony has occupied a quarter of an hour.

Some little time elapses, and the same procession leaves the building, accompanying the anointed pontiff to his residence. The choir sing from their great books the old Armenian chants[1] with their loud lamentations and long shakes. The band of the Russian regiment play a slow and solemn music, of which the sweetness puts to shame the nasal choristers. They are mostly Armenians in this band. These strains bring the rite to a conclusion, and we all disperse to our various amusements or occupations.

The dinner "in hall" upon this festival of the consecration was a very interesting incident. We were all to dine in the refectory. When I entered, the long apartment was crammed. The scholars of the Academy partook of the meal in the parallel chamber. The bishops, the monks, the delegates composed a sombre assembly, stretching in rows of long perspective down the tables. A single exception to this dark apparel was furnished by a delegate from Karabagh, who was seated next myself. He wore his national dress—a spare black tunic, fastened at the neck, displaying the front and sleeves of a light blue silken vest. His face was large and expressive of great resolution, especially the chin, which, like the cheeks, was shaved. The bronze complexion heightened the whiteness of the bold moustache. One was reminded of the best type of peasant proprietors in Europe; and, indeed, a view of the faces round one confirmed

[1] I was informed that the notes are those of the fifth century; but there appears to be no sufficient historical evidence for this belief. The historians, however, speak of this or that *vartapet* as having been a musician (*erajisht*). The Katholikos George IV. (d. 1882) transcribed the original notes from the Armenian manuscripts, but brought them into consonance with European methods.



Fig. 53. Edgmiatsin: Ceremony of the Consecration of the Katholikos—Anointing with Oil from the Beak of a Golden Dove.

that favourable impression which one receives from the society of Armenians in their native country. There is depicted a striking union of force of character with intelligence. In the midst of these reflections the Katholikos enters the building, and we all rise from our seats. He sits on his throne beneath the canopy, and a monk ministers to his needs. On either side stands a scarlet footman with a blue sash; the choir are drawn up behind. After the first course His Holiness rises, wearing his cowl and the glittering cross, and proposes the toast of the Emperor. It is a delight to hear him speak. He has all the personal fascination of Mr. Gladstone. Dinner proceeds as the catalogue of toasts is gone through, and between each toast European melodies are sung by the choir, and songs by an Armenian tenor of repute. The health of the Emperor is received with cries of *Oura;* but the remaining toasts without exception with the Armenian cheer of *Ketsze!* the equivalent of the French *Vive!* In proposing the health of M. Pribil His Holiness recites the various occasions upon which that functionary has come to Edgmiatsin to attend the consecration or the funeral of a Katholikos. Turning to his guest with a winning smile, he begs him to defer his next ceremonial visit until after the lapse of a moderate interval.

In the evening the whole quadrangle was illuminated with strings of coloured glasses containing candles. They made a very pretty show. At intervals huge firebrands threw a lurid light upon the buildings. The numerous choir of the Academy was marshalled in the court, including many ladies. The programme comprised several cantatas and some concerted music, and the standard was fairly high. But it appears difficult to eliminate the nasal pronunciation. The music-master was a great swell with his inspired look and flowing hair. The band discoursed the waltzes of the immortal Strauss. Before eleven all sound was hushed save the plash of the fountain, and darkness unrelieved had settled upon the scene. I made my way to the rooms of His Holiness and ascertained that he would receive me in spite of the lateness of the hour.

I found him reclining on a wooden couch in a bare white-washed apartment; a single rug was suspended upon the wall beside the couch. Such is the bed and such the furniture natural to the object of all this pomp, which I do not doubt is profoundly distasteful to such a character. He took my hand in his, and

we sat together for some time, the office of interpreter being, I think, performed by Dr. Arshak Ter Mikelean. Our talk ranged over many subjects; but I should have preferred to sit still, look in those eyes and hear that voice. I think we both felt that we were very near each other; and religion is a subtler thing than can be defined in creeds and dogmas or embodied in what the world calls "views."

On the following days the state of tension was gradually relaxed; the cloister settled down to ordinary life, and it was possible to examine the churches at one's ease. These are actually four in number, although in Mohammedan times the district was known under the name of Uch Kilisa, or Three Churches.[1] Their origin is bound up with a legend which plays such a considerable part in the history of the Armenian Church that, before passing to a description of them, it may not be inappropriate to instruct or amuse my readers with this curious story.[2]

Towards the close of the third century, while Tiridates was on the throne of Armenia, the Emperor Diocletian (284-305),[3] in search of a beauteous spouse, sent artists into all parts of his empire to depict the charms of suitable candidates for the imperial embrace. Now there happened to be in Rome a convent of nuns of austere life, of which the superior was called Gaiane. Under her charge was a virgin of surpassing beauty and of royal lineage, whose name was Ripsime. The artists entered her retreat by force, committed her lineaments to their tablets, and sent the portrait with several others to their master. The emperor had no sooner gazed upon the image of the high-born virgin than he fell violently in love. No pains were spared to hurry forward the preparations for the marriage, and the wretched bride was in despair. Her vow of chastity and the

[1] So it is known to all the early travellers. Cp. Poser, 1621; Evliya, 1647, "the Three Churches, a great convent built by the Greek emperors"; Rhodes, 1648-49; Tavernier, 1655; Chardin, 1673; Jesuit Missionaries, seventeenth century, Letter of Père Monier; Schillinger, c. 1699; Tournefort, 1701, who notices the inappropriateness of the name.

[2] It is given at length by Agathangelus, and may be found in that portion of the treatise to which I shall hereafter allude as "the Acts" (see note on p. 291, *infra*). There can be little doubt that the legend of the Ripsimians took the place of an old heathen legend, associated with the site at Vagharshapat. There seems to have been a local tradition that the cathedral and the chapels of Ripsime and Gaiane stand upon three rocks, whence in pagan times voices would be heard coming from underlying cavities and returning answers to questions addressed to them.

[3] This is probably an anachronism.

hatred she felt for the persecutor of her sect encouraged her to adopt the counsels of despair. She took to flight, attended by Gaiane and a numerous company of the nuns; and after many wanderings the band arrived upon the banks of the distant Araxes, in the outskirts of the Armenian capital of Vagharshapat. There they discovered a secluded retreat in a place which served as a store for vats, the city possessing extensive vineyards. One of their number was versed in the art of the manufacture of glass objects; she made glass pearls, and their price defrayed the cost of their daily sustenance.

Meanwhile the emperor had despatched messengers in every direction, and a Roman ambassador arrived at the court of the Armenian king. He was the bearer of a letter to that monarch from his master, who related how the Empire was suffering from the misdeeds of the Christians, and in particular how a beautiful virgin whom he himself had desired to marry had been abstracted by her infatuated co-sectaries and taken into the territory of his Armenian ally. The emperor begged his beloved colleague to track the party out, and, with the exception of the wondrous virgin, to put them all to death. As for the lovely fugitive, it would only be necessary to send her back; but the missive added, with an amiability truly worthy of an emperor, that the king might keep her if overcome by her charms.

As might be expected, no time was lost on the part of Tiridates to institute and elaborate the search. The band was found; the beauty of Ripsime needed no identification; and the fame of it attracted a multitude of all ranks—princes and nobles, shoulder to shoulder with the common people, closing round her under the sting of licentious desire. The nuns raised their hands to heaven and drew their veils about their faces; and perhaps this display of modesty averted their ruin. Early on the following morning there arrived from the palace magnificent litters and costly robes, the design of the king being to take to wife the Christian maiden and make her queen of the Armenians. But at this juncture a peal of thunder carried terror into all hearts, and a voice was heard descending from the sky. It was the voice of the Saviour, adjuring the nuns to take courage and remain firm for the glorification of His name among the peoples of the north. "Thou Ripsime," it proceeded, "hast been cast out (ἐξερρίφθης) with Gaiane and thy companions from the realm of death into that of eternal life." Meanwhile the thunder had

caused a panic among the assembled people, and the king's officers hastened to the royal presence, bringing a written report of all they had heard. But the monarch hardened his heart, and, since she refused the pomp he offered, gave orders that the maiden should be taken by force and brought to the royal apartments.

These directions were executed, but not without difficulty; the pious virgin was of stalwart frame, and the soldiers were obliged to drag her along the ground, or carry her struggling in their arms. When they had placed her in the king's chamber, and it was announced that the king had entered, the people outside the palace feasted and danced and sang. But their rejoicings were premature; for the intrepid Roman maiden was more than a match even for the powers of so redoubtable an antagonist. Tiridates was widely famed for physical strength and deeds of prowess; yet, although he persisted in his suit for not less than seven hours, he was at last compelled through sheer exhaustion to give in. The offices of Gaiane were invoked; she consented to speak, but her counsels were addressed to confirming the courage of her companion. Her Latin speech was understood by some among those present; they took stones and tore her face and broke her teeth. After a brief repose the king returned, and again endeavoured to overcome the girl's obstinacy; but after a long struggle the inspired amazon was a second time victorious; she threw the king (*ἔρριψεν*), destroyed his diadem, and dismissed him from the chamber, fainting and gathering around him his tattered robes.

A tender respect for the honour of women is a virtue of Christian origin, which the romance of Western chivalry converted into a cult of the fair sex. But the king of Armenia was an Oriental, a heathen and a barbarian; nor had he been instructed in the code which precludes the sentiment of humiliation in the vanquished where the victor is possessed of a female form. His passion as a lover was overcome by his fury as a thwarted despot; the virgin had fled from the palace, but his savage emissaries were soon on her track. The unfortunate maiden directed her steps to the retreat where the vats were stored, and gave the alarm to her companions. All those present, excepting one who was stricken with illness, accompanied her flight. But when they had reached some rising ground near the road which led to Artaxata, they were overtaken, bound with

cords and put to death with great cruelty. With Ripsime there perished thirty-two of her attendants, while the poor nun who had been left behind presently met the same fate. The martyrdom of Gaiane and of two companions took place on the following day and was attended with tortures which I should shudder to commit to paper.

Not many days after this tragedy its author was visited by the vengeance of heaven ; a demon entered his body, and, like his prototype of Babylon, the king of Armenia was turned into an animal eating grass. In the form of a wild boar he resisted all attempts to confine him ; and similar punishments overtook the royal family and attendants. At length the sister of the king, by name Khosrovidukht, beheld in the watches of night a vision. A man with a radiant face appeared and addressed her, to the effect that the only remedy was to send to the town of Artaxata and summon thence a prisoner named Gregory. When she related the vision people shook their heads, and attributed it to the incipient madness of the princess. For Gregory, who was once an honoured servant of King Tiridates, had been cast by the tyrant into a deep pit, on account of his profession of Christianity, not less than fifteen years ago. Would even his bones be forthcoming from such a place? But when several times the vision had been repeated, and the princess renewed her insistence, a great noble was despatched to the place where the pit was situated, near the town of Artaxata. A rope was let down into the cavern ; and, to the astonishment of all, there emerged a human form, blackened to the colour of coal. It was none other than St. Gregory.

The saint was met by the king and nobles, foaming and devouring their flesh, as he approached the city along the road from Artaxata. Sinking on his knees, he obtained from heaven the restoration of their reason, although not of their human forms. His next care was the burial of the martyrs ; he found their bodies, lying where they fell, and still untouched by corruption after the lapse of nine days. No dog or beast or bird had approached the remains. St. Gregory took them with him to the place where the vats were stored ; and for sixty-six days he sojourned in that place, instructing the king and nobles. After the lapse of that period he related to them a vision which he had beheld during the middle watches of the night. The royal party had come at sunrise to prostrate themselves before the holy man.

During his vigil, while his mind was revolving the recent acts

of Divine grace, a violent peal of thunder, followed by a terrible rumbling sound, had fallen upon his startled sense. The firmament opened as a tent opens, and from the heaven descended the form of a man, radiant with celestial light. The name of Gregory was pronounced; the saint looked upon the face of the man, and fell trembling to the ground. Enjoined to raise his eyes, he beheld the waters above the firmament cloven and parcelled apart like hills and valleys, extending beyond the range of sight. Streams of light poured down from on high upon the earth, and, with the light, innumerable cohorts of shining human figures with wings of living flame. At their head was One of terrible face whom all followed as the supreme ruler of the host; He bore in his hand a golden mallet, and, alighting on the ground in the centre of the city, struck with His mallet the crust of the broad earth. The report of the blow penetrated into the abysses below the earth; far and near all inequalities of the surface were smoothed out, and the land became a uniform plain.

And the saint perceived in the middle of the city, near the palace of the king, a circular pedestal made of gold and of the size of a large plateau, upon which was reared an immensely lofty column of fire with a cloud for capital, surmounted by a flaming cross. As he gazed he became aware of three other pedestals. One rose from the spot where the holy Gaiane suffered martyrdom; a second from the site of the massacre of Ripsime and her companions; and the third from the position occupied by the magazine of vats. These pedestals were of the colour of blood; the columns were of cloud, and the capitals of fire. The crosses resembled the cross of the Saviour, and might be likened to pure light. The three columns were equal in height one with another, but a little lower than that which rose near the royal palace. Upon the summits of all four were suspended arcs of wondrous appearance; and above the intersection of the arcs was displayed an edifice with a dome, the substance being cloud. On the arcs stood the thirty-seven martyrs, figures of ineffable beauty attired in white robes; while the crown of the figure above the edifice was a throne of Divine fashioning surmounted by the cross of Christ. The light of the throne mingled with the light of the cross and descended to the bases of the columns.

When Gregory had related this vision he bade all present gird up their loins and lose no time in erecting chapels to the martyred virgins, where their remains might be deposited. Thus the saints

might intercede for the afflicted king and people and assist them to become healed. Forthwith the multitude set to work, collected stones and bricks and cedar-wood; and, under the guidance of the saint, constructed three chapels after a prescribed design. One was placed towards the north and on the east of the city, on the spot where Ripsime and her companions met their death. The site of the second was further south, where the Superior Gaiane was massacred; while that of the third was close to the magazine of vats. These they built and adorned with lamps of gold and silver, with candelabra of which the flames were never quenched. Coffins were made for the remains of the martyrs; but no man was suffered to touch these relics, for none had been baptized. The saint himself and in solitude consigned the bodies to their receptacles. And when this was done he fell on his knees and prayed for the healing of the king, that haply the king might share in the work. The prayer was granted, and the horn fell from the royal hands and feet. To the monarch was assigned the task of digging tombs in the chapels to receive the coffins of the martyrs; and his consort, the queen Ashkhen, together with his sister Khosrovidukht, were associated with him in the work. The return of his vigour was signalised on the part of the king by a labour worthy of the patriarch Hayk. He made a journey to the summit of Ararat, which the compiler rightly observes would occupy seven days.[1] When he had completed this feat, he was seen bearing upon his shoulders eight blocks of stone of gigantic size which he had taken from the crest of the mountain. These he placed before the threshold of the chapel of the martyred Ripsime in expiation of the unholy battle which he had waged.[2] In this manner all was accomplished according to the vision of St. Gregory; while, as for the locality where had stood the column of fire on the golden pedestal, it was surrounded by the saint with a high wall and heavy gates; the sign of the cross was erected within it, that the pilgrims might there worship the all-powerful God. Upon his return from Cæsarea, and after the baptism of king and people, St. Gregory completed his task by building the cathedral upon this site.

[1] I interpret him in the sense of there and back.

[2] It appears to have been the custom among the Armenians down to comparatively recent times for pious people to place large blocks of stone in front of the entrance to a church by way of offering. Dubois de Montpéreux saw a number of such stones, 6 or 7 feet high, covered with crosses and arabesques, in front of the portal of the cathedral at Edgmiatsin. I do not know what has become of them.

Such is the legend which, with variations, has supplied the patent of the famous monastery, and invested the pilgrimage to the church of Christ descended and to the chapels of the martyrs with the character at once of a religious and of a patriotic act. The first of these edifices stands in the centre of the great quadrangle of the cloister, and, as we have seen, is believed to have been originally raised by St. Gregory the Illuminator, to whom the Armenians attribute their conversion to Christianity. The spot where the Saviour alighted and struck the broad earth with the mallet is situated about the middle of the building; and in the old days was indicated by a slab of hewn stone, 3 feet square and 5 feet in thickness.[1] This stone was said to have been substituted for the original marble slab which was reputed to have been due to St. Gregory himself and to have been carried off by Shah Abbas.[2] In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, during the pontificate of Astvatsadur, an elaborate altar was placed upon this hallowed site, and still stands there beneath the dome. It is surmounted by a canopy supported by four pillars of Tabriz marble, and is well seen in my illustration of the interior (Fig. 55). It appears to have replaced one of simpler design erected by the Katholikos Eleazar.

I cannot invite my reader to admire the architecture of this **cathedral**, although the interior, with its spacious body, central dome and four apses, one at each point of the compass, is sufficiently remarkable. Much the same design is seen in the church of St. Ripsime; but in that building it underlies important developments which probably argue a later date. The original form of the exterior is rather difficult to unravel owing to the excrescences, of which I may safely say that none are improvements, that have been added at various times. But let me briefly undertake the work of demolition, addressing myself to the illustration, which was taken from the south-west (Fig. 49).

The portal on the left of the picture is a work of the seventeenth century; it was commenced by the Katholikos Philip and completed by his successor Jacob in 1658. It is probably due to the mania for portals prevalent in Armenia at that period and not to a feature of the earlier plan. Just east of and adjoining the balcony of this structure is seen a window with a richly carved column in the centre, surmounted by a cross and supporting two ornamental arches. This window and the upper portion of the building to which it belongs are in subservience to the

[1] Chardin (ed. Langlès, Paris, 1811, 8vo, vol. ii. p. 175). See also Tavernier (book i. ch. iii.). The Jesuit missionaries, however, later on in the seventeenth century, speak of a structure resembling a mausoleum and having four stone columns and an altar in the centre. There can be little doubt that this is an allusion to the erection of Eleazar. [2] Chardin, *ibid.*

portal, with which they are in architectural harmony, and which they link with the main edifice. The lower part, including the frieze or quasi-classical moulding, which runs right round the church, is in a different style and of a different form of masonry, being indeed an integral member of the body of the church. You have only to remove the window and pointed roof, build up the wall above the cornice and cover it with a flat roof, and you obtain precisely the same projection which the picture shows on the south side and which is necessitated by the south apse.

We have now obtained the figure of a body with four projecting members, each of which represents an apse. The roof would appear to have been always built at a very low angle; it is, as usual, of stone. But we have yet to disencumber the apse on the east, which is completely hidden by the stupid building which contains the treasury and room of relics—an annexe which from outside lengthens and perverts the original edifice. We owe this feature to the Katholikos George IV., who died in 1882. This apse had a lesser projection than its fellows from the wall of the church, owing to the incidence of the two indispensable side chapels, which were small and merely entailed a slight advance of the rectangular walls. Over each apse it has been customary to have a belfry; when the portal was added this feature of the apse on the west was transferred to that structure. The open cupolas with belfries which are at present seen over the three apses were built in the year 1682 by the Katholikos Eleazar. They are of bright red stone, of which the hue contrasts in a displeasing manner with the dull grey of the body of the church.

The central dome, which is supported on piers in the interior, consists of a polygonal drum with a window in each face surmounted by a conical roof. A false arcade with slender columns and pointed arches enriches, together with a carved cornice, the simplicity of the design. This dome is believed to date from the seventh century, and to be the work which the Katholikos Komitas (617-625) erected in place of an earlier structure in wood. If this be the case we have an example of this form of dome in Armenia a hundred years before the time when it is supposed by Fergusson to have been developed.[1] It is a pity that some vandal has daubed it over with plaster and paint, which invests it with a grotesque appearance. Above each window is a medallion containing the head of a saint, and I saw traces of spiral carving on the columns. An almost flat-roofed building with this dome in the centre, with four projecting apses, one at each point of the compass and each surmounted by a little belfry —such would appear to have been the original exterior of the edifice which we see at the present day.

An ingenious traveller, whose judgment was influenced by the cornice of the building, and perhaps too by certain stone slabs with Greek inscriptions which are inserted in the walls, has conjectured that this exterior, with the exception of the dome and belfries, dates at least in part from

[1] *History of Architecture*, book i. ch. iv. Neo-Byzantine style. His remarks have reference to the shape of the dome and not to the pointed arches of the false arcade, which perhaps argue a much later date.

the reign of King Tiridates (end of the third and commencement of the fourth century).[1] He has gone so far as to present us with an illustration, showing what he conceives to have been the original form.[2] We know from Moses of Khorene that this monarch erected at Garni in the district of Erivan a building of surpassing beauty to his sister Khosrovidukht; and it is almost certain that the remains of a purely classical building which have been seen by modern travellers upon that site belong to this monument or to one of the same period.[3] The presumption of Dubois is therefore justified that a building of the reign of Tiridates would be likely to display classical features and ornaments. But his conjecture as regards this particular church must at present be considered to belong to the realm of hypothesis. The presence of the slabs with the Greek inscriptions would prove nothing; they may have been taken from an earlier building, or they may quite well be later in date than the invention and use of the Armenian alphabet in the fifth century. Dubois indeed is inclined to ascribe them to a period earlier than the conversion of Tiridates, and to see in them memorials of a Christianity practised in Armenia prior to the preaching of St. Gregory. This conjecture, which is adopted with complacency by Ritter, is probably quite baseless. The inscriptions have quite recently been subjected to the critical scrutiny of a scholar in Byzantine lore. I may refer my reader to his work. They are incised upon two slabs inserted in the wall, rather high up and a little east of the northern apse. The slabs are close together. I was unable to decipher the writing with the aid of my glasses, as the stone has been much worn. The slab with the figures of Paulos and Thekla is attributed by this scholar to the fifth or the sixth century, and its companion to about the same date. His opinion is based upon internal evidence.[4]

It would take too long to pursue a study relying on this kind of testimony into the approximate date of the cathedral. It must suffice to have placed my reader in possession of the leading facts. As regards the evidence of literature as to restorations and additions it is summarised in the accompanying note.[5] If the essential features of the present building

[1] Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage autour du Caucase*, Paris, 1839-43, vol. iii. pp. 372 *seq.* [2] *Ibid.* Atlas, series iii. plate 7.

[3] See Telfer, *The Crimea and Transcaucasia*, London, 1876, vol. i. p. 222, and Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 382 *seq.*

[4] Strgygowski, *Das Etschmiadzin-Evangeliar*, Vienna, 1891. I read the large inscription thus:—*Ἰησοῦ βοήθει πάντας τοὺς εὐχομένους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Ζιβιθαιν* (?)—*κύριε ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦλον σοῦ Ἀρχίαν—καὶ κύριε Ἐλέησον Ἕλπιδιν* (for Ἐλπιδα or Ἐλπιδίαν, the variation of the accusative of Ἕλπις into -*πιδιν* being not unusual)—*Δανίηλ, Τίρερ, Γαρίκινις*. The word *Ζιβιθαιν* is taken as a proper name by Brosset (*Voyage Archéologique*, St. Petersburg, 1849-51, 3me rapp., p. 16, and by Strgygowski, who supposes it to be the same as Zuithai, found in Armenian writers, *e.g.* in Faustus of Byzantium, who speaks of a Zuithai as priest of the town of Artaxata during the persecution of Shapur (Faustus, iv. 56). Zuithai would be the priest in whose church the memorial had been placed. As for the three proper names at the end, that of Tirer has been found in an inscription of the thirteenth century. Garikinis denotes the proper name Garegin.

[5] It is a matter of surmise that Nerses I. restored the sacred buildings of Vagharshapat after the destruction of that city by the Persian armies in the fourth century (see

be due to the restoration of Vahan Mamikonean (A.D. 483), it will be a work anterior to Justinian. At that time the Armenian architect would not have enjoyed the advantage of studying the designs of the several churches which, according to Procopius, that emperor erected in Western Armenia.[1] It would appear preferable to ascribe these features to the restoration under Komitas (618), if we were obliged to choose between the two. But this and kindred questions respecting the origin of the church and monastery are wrapped in obscurity. At what date did Edgmiatsin become the residence of the katholikos? This cardinal question still remains without a certain answer. We know that he transferred his seat from Vagharshapat to Dvin in the year 452, and that he did not return until 1441. We also know that the seventh century was a period of building activity; after Komitas we have the Katholikos Nerses III. (640-661), surnamed the builder, who erected a magnificent church in close vicinity to the churches of Edgmiatsin and buried the relics of St. Gregory beneath its four colossal pillars.[2] There is no reason to doubt that the four Byzantine capitals

Faustus, v. 1); but the first restoration of the cathedral of which I can find any certain mention is that of the great Armenian chief Vahan Mamikonean in or about the year 483 (Lazar Pharpetzi in Langlois' *Collection des historiens de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1867-69, vol. ii. p. 352. And see Saint-Martin, *Mémoires sur l'Arménie*, Paris, 1818, vol. i. p. 328). Armenia was at this time struggling to rid herself of the Persian (Sasanian) yoke, having lost her Arsakid dynasty. The katholikos no longer resided at Edgmiatsin, the pontifical seat having been transferred to Dvin in A.D. 452 (Saint-Martin, *ibid.* vol. i. p. 437); nor does he return until A.D. 1441. In 618 it was again restored by the Katholikos Komitas (Saint-Martin, i. 116, quoting John Katholikos; and cp. Sebeos, *Hist. of Heraclius*, iii. 25 (in Armenian)), who substituted a dome in stone in place of the earlier wooden one. Certain repairs are attributed to the Katholikos Nerses III., surnamed the builder, A.D. 640-661, I know not upon what authority. After this there ensues a long period, for which we appear to have no records. The katholikos often changes his residence. After the destruction of the Cilician kingdom and in the year 1438 the right arm of St. Gregory, a relic which had become the palladium of the pontifical office, was transferred from Sis, the capital of that kingdom, to Edgmiatsin (Gelzer, article *Armenien* in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie*, Leipzic, 1896). Saint-Martin places the transfer thither of the seat of the pontificate in the year 1441. In 1442 the Katholikos Kirakos undertook the necessary repairs (Thomas Metsobatzi). We now leap to the reign of Shah Abbas of Persia, who, as is well known, transported a whole colony of Armenians from the valley of the Araxes to the outskirts of his capital, Ispahan. In 1614 this monarch carried off a number of the venerated stones of the church to New Julfa to form the nucleus of a new Edgmiatsin (Arakel of Tauris, ch. xxiv.). The famous monastery fell into woeful neglect. The Katholikos Moses (1629-33) restored it, but added no new feature. His successor Philip renewed the roof (inscriptions, records, etc.). I think I have mentioned subsequent additions. The steps which run round the church were added or extensively restored by the Katholikos Lukas (in 1784). But they have been modified by Makar I. Repairs are ascribed to the pontiffs Astvatsadur, Simeon and Ephraim, the last of whom repaired in 1816 the damages which the Persians had done to the roof by placing a battery upon it. For more detailed information I may refer my reader to a work entitled: *Description of the Mother Church of the Armenians*, by Vahan Vardapet Bastamean, Edgmiatsin, 1877 (in Armenian and Russian).

[1] See the translation of the *De Edificiis* by Stewart, annotated by Sir Charles Wilson, London, 1896, pp. 73 *seq.* (Palestine Pilgrims Text Society).

[2] John Katholikos, c. xii. And see Sebeos, *Hist. of Heraclius*, iii. 33.

which are preserved in the Academy belonged to this edifice.[1] The independence of the national church, so jealously guarded by the Armenians, was intimately bound up with the Edgmiatsin legend; and the pontiffs appear to have spared no pains during the earlier centuries to maintain the holy places and prevent them sharing the fate of the temporal capital, Vagharshapat.

The entrance from the portal to the church is through a rather low doorway, conducting you into the apse-formed projection on the west. The stone panels about and above this doorway are richly carved and show traces of gilding (Fig. 54). In the south wall of the building you are shown an old door, long walled up, which is supposed to date from a hoar antiquity and is called the door of Tiridates. Lastly you will probably be taken to the belfry above the portal and be shown the famous Tibetan bell. It bears the thrice repeated legend *Ôm a hum*, the mystic formula of the Buddhists.[2] Before the portal are several tombstones, commemorating deceased pontiffs, and among them that of the enlightened Nerses V. One in marble is raised over the remains of Sir John Macdonald, British envoy to the court of Persia. The bald inscription contrasts with the eloquence of the situation under the shadow of this St. Peter's of distant Armenia and among the graves of the highest dignitaries of her national church.[3]

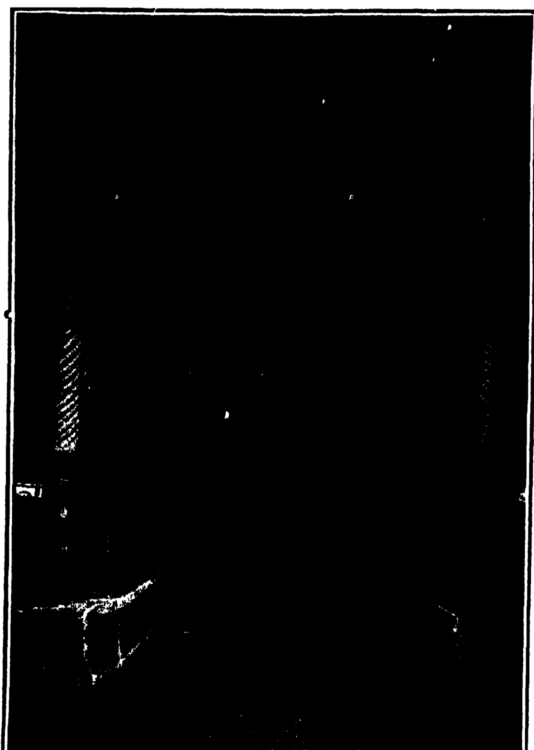


FIG. 54. INTERIOR OF THE PORTAL OF THE CATHEDRAL.

[1] They bear the monograms of Nerses Katholikos and are reproduced by Strgygowski (*op. cit.*), to whom I refer my reader. I only saw one of them during my stay.

[2] Brosset (*Bull. Scient. de l'Acad. de Sc. de St. Pétersbourg*, vol. ii. 1837) has transcribed the letters and published a valuable little notice on the subject.

[3] The circumstance appealed to Brosset as a rare example of religious tolerance (*Voyage Arch.*, rapp. 3, p. 19).

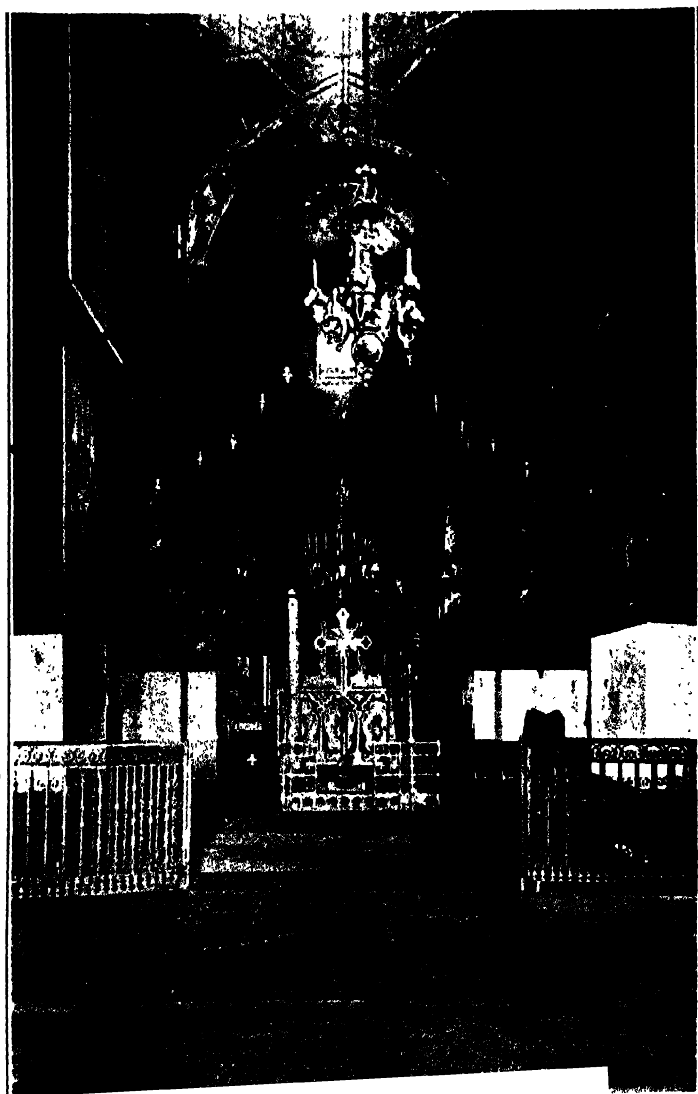


FIG. 55. [illegible]

Passing now to the interior (Fig. 55 and plan), it is the form which is impressive—the quadruple apse with a canopy altar in each of these recesses, except that on the west. In the centre, beneath the dome, stands the altar which I have already described; there are therefore four altars in this church. In front of the apse on the east rises the parapet of the daïs, as usual; but the higher level of the floor in those on the north and south is approached by steps which extend from wall to wall. The lateral chapels on the east, which are so constant a feature in Armenian churches, are scarcely noticeable in this building, being, I think, incorporated in the additions which were made by George IV. at the back of the church. The space on the floor of the edifice is railed off in two places from north to south. There is of course no pulpit, and there are no pews. The light falls from twelve little windows in the spacious dome upon a scene which is rendered dim by the darkness of the mural paintings, and which serves to enhance the flashing ornaments on the central altar. I am told that there are in all no less than thirty-five windows; but they are small and insignificant. Their distribution is not subordinate to any plan. The paintings on the walls are of no merit; they represent Biblical subjects, and while some are in fresco, others are, on canvas applied to the stone. They must have been added at a comparatively recent date; for we are expressly told by Chardin that in his time the interior was quite bare. The dome has been pleasantly decorated in the Persian style with coloured arabesques. These and the various frescos are attributed to an Armenian artist who lived during the reign of Nadir Shah (1736-47).[1]

The church is large if compared to other ancient Armenian temples, but small if judged by a Western standard. The area enclosed must be rather less than in the case of the cathedral at Ani, although the dimensions are about the same when the four projections are included. The measurements of the interior, which I took myself, give an extreme length of 108 feet 4 inches, and an extreme breadth of just over 98 feet. Each apse has a depth of about 15 feet 3 inches—a dimension which I have included in my totals.[2] In the south apse stands the chest containing the vessel with the holy oil, and beside it a little lamp which flickers night and day. The recess of its opposite counterpart is adorned with mural paintings representing eight full-length portraits of the pillars of the Armenian Church. They are identified as St. Gregory, with his sons Aristakes and Verthanes, and his grandson Grigor; as Yusik, Nerses the First, Sahak and Mesrop. The ceremony of ordination of bishops takes place in this northern apse. A cistern has been sunk below the floor in front of the recess to serve in time of siege. Two thrones are conspicuous in the body of the church, both of which may be discerned in my illustration. The

[1] Dubois, *Voyage autour du Caucase*, vol. iii. p. 371. But see Haxthausen, *Transcaucasia*, p. 287.

[2] I was unable to measure each apse; but I was assured that they were all of the same or nearly the same size. The portal is of course not included in the above measurements.

first, which adjoins the central altar, is inscribed with the name of Petros Katholikos (Peter II. 1748) and is said to have been a present from the Pope.[1] The second, situated further east, is that which was occupied by the Katholikos during the service which I attended. It is the gift of Armenians during the pontificate of Astvatsadur (1715-25).

The **treasury and room of relics** contain many interesting objects. To these chambers is allotted the building on the east of the church. Both are entered from the interior and through doors in the east wall, that on the north of the apse communicating with the treasury, and that on the south with the apartment containing the relics. Among the treasures are several objects which deserve the attention of the student of art, examples of mediæval Armenian craft being, I imagine, none too frequent. I observed a crystal cross, said to belong to the Bagratid period, and some other crosses reputed to have come from Ani. A gold crown, inlaid with jewels, is ascribed to King Tiridates, and, whatever its origin, is a very interesting object. The same may be said of a silver saucer with repoussé figures dating from the pontificate of Nerses IV. (1166-73). There are a quantity of jewelled mitres and embroidered stoles and ornaments for the church. There are seals of the pontiffs and coins of the Rupenian (Cilician) dynasty. Some store is set upon a head of Dionysus which is believed to be of Egyptian origin. The monastery has become possessed of a most curious object in the shape of a huge caldron, standing on three legs, and having as handles four tigers in the act of climbing. It was found not many years ago in a cloister near Tiflis; buried within it was a bell. An inscription

FIG. 56. 1. FIG. 56. 2.

[1] Telfer (*Crimea and Transcaucasia*, London, 1876, vol. i. p. 231) seems to refer to this throne, which he ascribes to Pope Innocent XI., a gift to James IV. (1655-80).

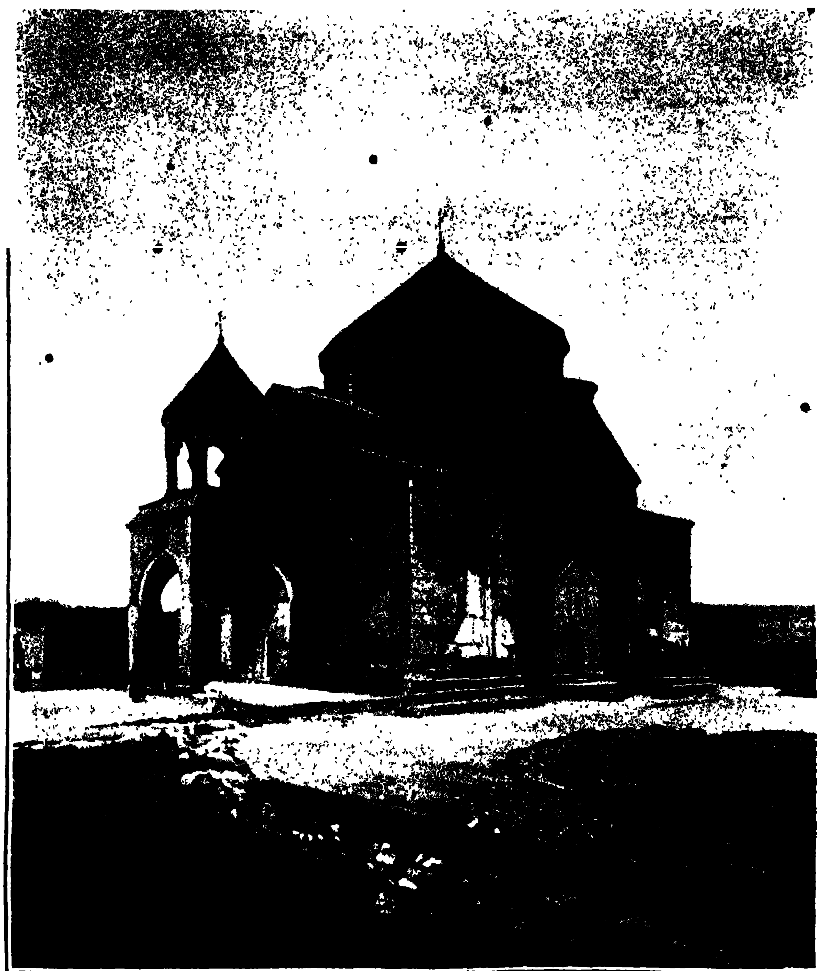


Fig. 57. Edgmiatsin: Exterior of St. Ripsime.

round the rim gives the date of the Armenian era 781 or A.D. 1331. In the chamber of relics are preserved a fine collection of episcopal staves surmounted by a cross above a knot of hissing serpents' heads (Fig. 56, Nos. 1 and 2). Many are of exquisite workmanship.

The principal relics are the hand and arm of St. Gregory, preserved in a silver gilt case; the head of the holy spear, reputed to possess the power of staying epidemics;[1] a fragment of the Ark, to which is attached a jewelled cross; the head and arm of St. Thaddeus, the apostle; the hand and arm of St. Jacob of Nisibis; a panel carved with a crucified Christ, said to be the work of St. John the Apostle and to have been procured by Ashot Patricius; finally a box containing relics of St. Ripsime.

The **chapels of the martyrs**, which are churches rather than chapels, are situated within short walks from the monastery. Thus St. Gaiane is not more than about a quarter of a mile distant in a southerly direction. St. Ripsime is a little further, say three-quarters of a mile; it is placed to the east of Edgmiatsin and is the first building which you see as you drive from Erivan, on the very outskirts of the trees and greenery. Shoghakath is a near neighbour of Ripsime on the side of the great cloister.

Of these the largest and certainly the most interesting is that which commemorates the brave deeds of the beautiful virgin from Rome. In designing the **church of the Holy Ripsime** the architect has been faithful to the essential features of that of Edgmiatsin—the quadruple apse and the central dome. But the problem before him was how to eliminate the unsightly projections of the apsidal arms, and how to rear the whole fabric by successive stages to the crown of the dome. His solution of the problem, if somewhat rudimentary and fantastic, is certainly successful from the point of view of looks (Fig. 57 and plan). My reader will of course eliminate the portal and belfry in appreciating this piece of architecture. They were added, the portal in 1653 by the Katholikos Philippos, and the belfry in 1790. He will observe that the outer walls compose a rectangular figure; and a moment's reflection will show him that such a figure could only be presented by a stupendous thickening of the wall on either side of each apse. This difficulty has been in part surmounted by the introduction of niches, two for each apsidal recess. These external niches are nearly six feet deep on the north and south sides, a little shallower on the west and east. The treatment of this feature is quite inchoate; but we shall see it in perfection at Ani. At the same time it is evident that provision had to be made for a side chapel on either side of the apse on the east. These have been supplied according to a design which I have not seen elsewhere, although it appears to be repeated in the church of Sion in the valley of the Tana, a tributary of the Kur, erected at the end of the tenth century.[2] Between the

[1] See Morier, *Second Journey*, pp. 323 *seq.*
[2] See Dubois de Montpéreux, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 213, and Neale's *Holy Eastern*

four apsidal recesses of the interior are inserted the narrow openings of four circular and much smaller cavities, communicating by doors which are almost imperceptible with rectangular chambers or chapels. Of these chambers the two on the east provide the requirements of the church, while those on the west were probably added for uniformity.[1] The effect of the eight recesses, crowned by a dome of unusual diameter for the size of the structure,[2] is extremely pleasing to the eye; and St. Ripsime is the most impressive ecclesiastical edifice which I have yet presented to my reader. The drum of the dome has sixteen sides; besides the windows which it contains, light is admitted through bold apertures in each of the apsidal recesses. Standing beneath the dome, one admires the great height of the building. The interior measurements are a length of 74 feet 1 inch and a breadth of 58 feet 4 inches.

The question of the date of Ripsime is again not free from difficulty. We know that the Katholikos Komitas rebuilt the church in A.D. 618;[3] nor, so far as I have been able to ascertain, do we possess records of any subsequent change in the plan. Students of architecture may be inclined to assign it to a later period. The tomb of the martyr is placed in a grotto beneath the apse on the east.[4] Just west of the portal there is a low building, serving as a residence for monks, and, adjoining it, an enclosure for cows. Church and cloister are surrounded by a high mud wall, with round towers at the angles.

St. Gaiane is an edifice of much humbler architectural pretensions, which is said to date from the pontificate of Ezra (A.D. 628-640) (Fig. 58 and plan).[5] The porch was added, as we learn from an inscription, in the year 1687 by the Katholikos Eleazar. It serves as a place of burial for the pontiffs and contains many alabaster slabs. On the north side have been inserted in the archway of a wide aperture two old Armenian crosses, framed within an ornamental trophy. Entering the building from this portal we are impressed with its simplicity; and this feeling is enhanced by the absence of all decoration, the beautiful masonry being left without any covering of lime. The architect has wisely dispensed with the quadruple apse, and has contented himself with one. But he has retained the rectangular form of the side chapels, and he has separated them by a wall from the body of the building. Four

Church, vol. i. p. 296. The former of these writers informs us that our church of St. Ripsime "a servi de type à une foule d'autres églises," and the latter has improved upon this statement by asserting that it is "the norm of all Armenian ecclesiastical buildings" (Dubois, vol. iii. p. 380, and Neale, vol. i. p. 293). Leaving Georgia out of account, both these statements are incorrect.

[1] Unless we accept Neale's hypothesis that they served as a *narthex*. But the *narthex* is not a feature of the churches of Great Armenia.

[2] According to Brosset (*Voyage Arch.*, rapp. 3, p. 82) the diameter of the dome is not less than about 35 feet. The height is given by Neale, *op. cit.* p. 296, as 104½ feet to the top of the cross.

[3] Sebeos, *History of Heraklius* (in Armenian), part iii. ch. xxv.

[4] For the theft and recovery of these relics see Smith and Dwight (*Missionary Researches*, London, 1834, p. 280), and Brosset (*Voyage Arch.*, rapp. 3, p. 83).

[5] Brosset, *ibid.* p. 82. The date reposes upon the authority of the historian, John Katholikos.



Fig. 58. Edgmiatsin: Exterior of St. Gaiane.



FIG. 60. EDGMIATSIN: EXTERIOR OF SHOGHAKATH.

detached piers support a dome which is much smaller than that of Ripsime, but resembles it in the sense of great height which it lends to the interior. The length of the building is 70 feet 2 inches, and the breadth 47 feet. The vault, containing the grave of Gaiane, is approached from one of the side chapels, and is covered by a simple stone with a little carpet, upon which devotees offer coins. The adjacent cloister consists of a humble building on the south-west. The church is surrounded by tombs. Lying against the north wall are some interesting old stones, one of which is exquisitely sculptured (Fig. 59). It probably constituted a boundary-stone, and may have been brought hither as an offering to the saint. The two figures which are seen in my illustration of the building represent opposite types among the inhabitants of Edgmiatsin. The white-headed abbot on the left belongs to the old school, with habits and standards which are not agreeable or exalted. That on the right is the figure of Dr. Arshak Ter-Mikelean, fresh from the atmosphere of a German university.

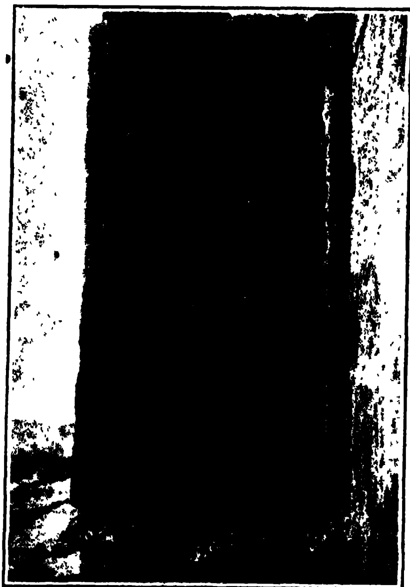


FIG. 59. SCULPTURED STONE.

The third and smallest of the churches marks the site of the wine-press, where the holy martyrs sojourned and where St. Gregory resided after his release from the pit at Artaxata. It is situated to the north-east of Edgmiatsin and to the west of St. Ripsime. It bears the name of **Shoghakath**, or Effusion of Light. I was informed that the attendants of Saints Ripsime and Gaiane were buried in a vault on the south side of the apse.[1] In disposition the building resembles St. Gaiane; but it is much longer (58 feet 2 inches) in comparison with its breadth (24 feet 8 inches). We learn from an inscription over the door of the church that the portal was added by the Katholikos Nahapet in A.D. 1693. The belfry is due to the same pontiff;[2] his grave is conspicuous within the portal (Fig. 60 and plan). The dome rests on four massive piers attached to the wall. The joints of the pink and grey stone are visible in the interior, as in the case of the two buildings described; and so admirably are they fitted

[1] According to Agathangelus the third chapel was built upon the site of the wine-press. Further on we are told that it was situated *north* of the town, and that in it was buried the unfortunate nun who was left behind owing to sickness.

[2] Brosset (*Bull. Scientifique Acad. Sc. St. Pétersbourg*, 1840, pp. 46 *seq.*) quotes a letter from Nahabet to this effect.

that one would regret the introduction of any internal decoration. A scrutiny of the exterior reveals the fact that the church has been most carefully restored, stones having been removed here and there and replaced. Brosset informs us that mention is made in certain records of Armenian Councils of the construction by Nerses III. (A.D. 640-649) in the town of Vagharshapat of a church of Shoghakath; but he supposes—it would appear upon inconclusive evidence—that this name is intended to designate the cathedral, Edgmiatsin.[1] If it be taken to refer to the wine-press chapel, then all three edifices will have been rebuilt in the seventh century by the testimony of records. I may add that according to an inscription in the monastery of Uch Kilisa, near Diadin, that cloister was also restored in the seventh century.[2] If the buildings as we now see them were erected in that century, the framework at least of Edgmiatsin must be attributed to an earlier date.

I return from this detailed description of the cathedral and the chapels of the martyrs to the more general tenour of the contents of this chapter. Edgmiatsin is rapidly developing into a home of the higher education, and it enjoys the proud privilege of possessing an institution which is unique in all Armenia for the comparatively exalted standard of the course of study which it provides. The Academy at once dispenses the usual curriculum of a seminary and supplies a higher course, extending over three years. Such an excessive disporting in the realms of dangerous knowledge was only sanctioned by the Russian Government on the understanding that the privilege should be confined to candidates for the priesthood. The nature of their profession may have appeared a sufficient guarantee that the learning imparted would be strictly subordinated to "views." Besides, there was always the safeguard that the curriculum must be submitted to the Russian bureaucracy, and approved in due course by these aureoled arbiters, enthroned above the shifting mists and slippery quagmires among which poor Knowledge often faints and sometimes sinks. Her youngest and hardiest offspring, pertinacious Natural Science, has been excluded from these intellectual preserves; and I was assured that the mere mention of the name of this arch-enemy in a prospectus would produce the same effect among the august censors as a challenge from the prince of devils among the blessed. The course is confined to theology, history and literature, foreign as well as Armenian. To these subjects is added a study which the

[1] Brosset, *ibid.*

[2] Belck, in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Berlin, 1893, Heft ii. p. 77.

Germans have developed under the name of *Pädagogik*. Within this formula, I was given to understand, are included at Edgmiatsin, besides the art of the teacher, a certain general knowledge of philosophy and psychology. The students are obliged to pass a certain standard by examination at the end of each year.

The idea of founding such an institution was conceived by Nerses V. (d. 1857), whose liberal mind sought to satisfy by this project the needs of his countrymen both in secular and religious education.[1] His proposal was rejected by the Russian Government, and he was himself sent into honorary exile. Better fortune attended the instances of George IV.; and the Academy was actually founded during his pontificate in 1873 or 1874. An inscription over the door records that the principal aim of the founder was the encouragement of the study of Armenian theology and literature. It is interesting to note that the bulk of the scholars do not in fact become enrolled in the priesthood. As a rule there are about 150 to 200 students in the various grades of the seminary and the academy; but I was informed that during the last ten years only about 15 had taken orders. The rest have become teachers in the Armenian schools, or migrated to universities in Russia, or adopted professional or commercial pursuits. I enquired as to the nature of the instruction in theology, and learnt that until the year 1892 that pompous term had been applied to a simple course of religious instruction. In that year a promising scholar who had been sent to Germany for education appeared upon the scene. I have already mentioned the name of Dr. Arshak Ter-Mikelean; he took his degree in the University of Jena, and now presides over the theological course. At the time of my visit two young Armenians were studying theology at Leipzic at the expense of the Armenian Church. At the same date the students in the academical course numbered about forty.

My reader is aware that in Russian Armenia the word seminarist does not necessarily apply exclusively to candidates for the priesthood. The seminary is nothing more than the highest grade in the Armenian school system, with the single exception of the more exalted course provided by this Academy. The great majority of the pupils are maintained out of the revenues of the cloister; but those who are able pay what they can. A youth enters the seminary when about thirteen or fourteen years old, and the academy at about nineteen or twenty.

[1] Haxthausen, *Transcaucasia*, p. 295.

Both institutions are housed in the same building. Each diocese is invited to make a certain number of presentations; and boys and young men are encouraged to come from the Turkish provinces. As a matter of fact few are able to avail themselves of the offer. The scholars reside within the building, one dormitory being allotted to the academy and another to the seminary. These dormitories are kept scrupulously neat and clean. There is a fine music room with a grand piano, and there is also a nice library with casts of the immortal works of Greek sculpture illuminating the shadows above the shelves. How strange they seem in this distant land, where the study of the classics is not included even in *the higher education!*

The effect which is being produced upon the character of the monastic priests by the wise solicitude for education which has characterised the Armenian movement is almost incalculable. In old days the monks were chosen by the bishops from among their attendants; and this custom obtained even after the development of seminarial instruction within the cloister. But in 1892 the synod issued a decree enjoining that, except in very special circumstances, no person should be ordained monk who had not passed through a seminary. He is nominated by the bishop, but must be approved by the synod. It is a pity that hitherto no steps have been taken to raise the standard of the ordinary clergy. But we must admit that it would not be easy to effect such a reform from above. For all practical purposes we may count three grades in the hierarchy of the Armenian Church. In the first figure the bishops, the second comprises the monks and parish priests, and the third includes the deacons. Over all three is exalted the authority of the katholikos, the keystone of the dome of the edifice. Celibacy is imposed upon the bishops and monks, while marriage is rendered obligatory upon the parish priests. Thus a sharp division exists between the two orders of clergy, arising out of a complete difference in mode of life. Moreover the ordinary clergy are elected by the laity—a custom to which the people jealously cling. The inhabitants of a town or village select their future pastor from among their own number. Of course the bishop might refuse to ordain. But such a course would only be warranted in very special circumstances; the same being predicated of the right of the bishop to depose a priest. Thus the parish clergy occupy a special and somewhat independent

position. In the rural districts the spread of education has not yet commenced to touch them; nor will they emerge from their present deplorable debasement until a general quickening of public opinion shall take place.

The monks or celibate priests are, I believe, always connected with convents; they are known under the style of *vardapet*, or doctor, which is attached to their individual names. They are governed according to the rule of St. Basil of Cæsarea, the contemporary and monitor of the Armenian pontiff, Nerses the Great (A.D. 340-374). They do not practise the tonsure, and they wear their beards. They are attired in long black robes with conical cowls. Their numbers must have considerably diminished since 1700, at which date we are informed this convent alone contained over a hundred monks.[1] At present there are in all not more than some fifty vardapets within the wide limits of the Russian provinces. Of these about half reside at Edgmiatsin. As members of the synod or as bursars, as overseers of the printing press or as editors of the official journal, *Ararat*, their profession is no sinecure. All monks in Russian territory are ordained at Edgmiatsin, and it is the custom for all bishops, whether in Russian Armenia or abroad, to be consecrated in the church of the Illuminator.

The revenues dispensed by the katholikos are derived from several sources. There is the property of the monastery, consisting of lands and villages in the valley of the Araxes and elsewhere, to which, in the absence of statutes of mortmain, additions are constantly being made. The income from this source and from offerings and contributions of various kinds amounts, I believe, to about £8000 a year. The general property of the Church is also administered from Edgmiatsin, the synod being specially invested with this important function. Donations in lands or money are frequently forthcoming, and are devoted to the support of the various institutions. The accounts of the monasteries and bishoprics in Russia are audited and passed by the synod. But the clergy are supported by their own flocks; and, beyond submitting their accounts to the proper authority, the parishes are practically autonomous.

There can be little doubt that the overseeing by the

[1] Schillinger, *Persianische und Ost-Indianische Reise*, Nürnberg, 1707. I do not credit the statement of Evliya, who visited Edgmiatsin in A.D. 1647, to the effect that at that time the monastery was inhabited by about 500 monks.

katholikos and synod of the administration of the funds of the Church in Russia has already effected a salutary change. Should Russia become possessed of the Turkish provinces, and should her counsels incline to the sounder policy of encouraging the Armenians to work out their salvation in their own way, this concentration is likely to promote a general reform of the Armenian clergy. The authority of the katholikos at the present day extends to practically all Armenians professing the national religion. That authority suffered division during the troubled period of long duration, which followed the overthrow of the Bagratid dynasty (A.D. 1045) and the gradual dispersal of the Armenian people. But the Katholikos of Sis has quite recently professed his spiritual allegiance to Edgmiatsin;[1] and the recluse of Akhtamar, that beauteous island in the lake of Van, alone continues pretence to the title and station of a supreme pontiff. His jurisdiction is confined to his rock and a few villages on the mainland. The patriarchate of Constantinople is an institution which is the result of political exigencies, and which in no way derogates from the spiritual supremacy of the successor of St. Gregory, enthroned in the cloister near the banks of the Araxes.

My reader has perhaps divined from a perusal of the foregoing paragraphs that an interesting feature of the Armenian Church is the power enjoyed by the laity, which indeed may be described as predominant. With them rests the choice of the ordinary clergy, and in practice their voice prevails in the selection of a katholikos. That Church is indeed a compromise, so far as her ministers are concerned, between opposite principles in the organisation of Christianity. The monastic priests represent the principle of elevating a hierarchy into a position of lofty independence. From among their ranks are taken the bishops. But the great body of the clergy are strictly the ministers of the people, supported by their voluntary contributions. From these conclusions, derived from a study of contemporary conditions, I pass to a brief examination of the Edgmiatsin legend, and of the history and character of that interesting ecclesiastical edifice which rises in the background of all that I have written in the present chapter.

The Armenians boast that the Gospel was preached to their ancestors by the first apostles, and that they were the first people

[1] Bryce, *Transcaucasia and Ararat*, note to 4th edition, London, 1896, p. 314.

to adopt Christianity as the religion of the State. They separate these two events by a respectable interval, for they attribute the conversion of king and people to a miracle performed by St. Gregory towards the close of the third century. We have seen that the current version of that miracle comprises a vision by which Jesus Christ becomes in effect the Founder of their cathedral church. The inference is perhaps legitimate that they hold their own Church, as an organisation, to have been established by Christ Himself; and its independence of all hierarchies, whether of the East or of the West, to be based upon the same supreme sanction.[1] We are carried back by a discussion of these claims to the very dawn of the Christian religion; and it will be wise to keep them before us as prominent landmarks to control the discursiveness of an enquiry which must also be brief.

I. The apostles mentioned by Armenian writers as having carried the Gospel into Armenia are St. Bartholomew, St. Thaddeus —the son or brother of St. James—St. Simon and St. Jude.[2] Of

[1] It is interesting to place together the two following passages, the first taken from a modern and representative Armenian source, the second from the work of a German scholar. I translate both from the German. Dr. Arshak Ter-Mikelean, professor of theology in the Academy at Edgmiatsin, writes (*Die Armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zur byzantinischen*, Leipzic, 1892, p. 9): "The mother church of Gregory was not founded by him nor even by the apostles, who are only mortal men; but the everlasting Founder, the only Head of the Church, Himself descends in glory from Heaven and commands him to build a church after His plan and His directions on a prescribed site in the royal city, Vagharshapat. Christ Himself appears to Gregory in a vision and instructs him what he shall do . . ."; and Professor Gelzer draws the inference (*Die Anfänge der armenischen Kirche*, in *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der K. S. Gesell. der Wissenschaften zu Leipzic, Phil.-Hist. Classe*, 1895, p. 127): "The ancient capital Vagharshapat . . . bears at the present day the name Edgmiatsin, 'the Only Begotten descended from Heaven,' in everlasting remembrance that Christ Himself founded the Armenian Church and thereby established her as autokephalous and completely independent of every patriarchate, whether of the East or of the West."

[2] Moses of Khorene mentions St. Bartholomew and St. Simon (ii. 34, in Langlois, *Collection des hist. de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1867-69, vol. ii. p. 98), and says that the former suffered martyrdom in the town of Arevban, while the other was reputed to have met the same fate in Veriospora. According to Gelzer (article *Armenien* in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie*, Leipzic, 1896) the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew in Urbanopolis, a town of Great Armenia, was known to Greek writers as early as the fifth century. Urbanopolis, Albanopolis, or Korbanopolis (Armenian, Arevbanos or Arebonos-Kaghak) may perhaps be identified with Arabion castellum, where in fact Vardan (*c.* 1270) tells us that the saint was murdered. Arabion castellum was a fort on the Stranga, or Great Zab, which Mr. F. C. Conybeare (*Key of Truth*, Oxford, 1898, p. cii.) connects with the modern Deir, where at the present day the monastery and church of St. Bartholomew stand. I surmise that nothing is known of the site of Veriospora. Moses, following the Edessene tradition, speaks of St. Thaddeus as one of the seventy disciples, relates at length his mission to King Abgar of Edessa (Urfa in Mesopotamia), and speaks of his conversion of King Sanatruk, successor of Abgar, and of his martyrdom in the canton of Chavarchan, called in his day Ardaz, as well-known facts. For St. Jude I rely on Issaverdens (*Armenia and the Armenians*, Venice, 1878, vol. ii. p. 21), who relates that he was put to death and buried in the city of Urmi in Azerbaijan.

these the two first named are alone in general repute. But the fame of St. Thaddeus reposes upon no less a title than that of having executed a commission from Jesus Christ Himself to the court of an Arsakid king of Lower Armenia or Mesopotamia, whom the Armenians claim as one of their own royal line. King Abgar of Edessa is said to have corresponded with the Saviour and to have begged Him to come to his capital and heal him of a malady. The letter is preserved, which purports to contain the reply of Jesus, to the effect that after His ascension He would despatch one of the disciples. With this epistle came a portrait of the features of the Redeemer, which in subsequent times was the peculiar pride of Edessa. In due course the disciple arrived in the person of St. Thaddeus, and the king was restored to health. Monarch and people embraced the Christian faith. After the death of Abgar, which appears to have taken place at no long interval, his dominions were divided between his son and nephew. The former returned at once to the religion of his ancestors and reopened the temples of the gods. The latter, who seems to have reigned over a portion of Armenia proper, and who bore the name of Sanatruk, was visited by the apostle and embraced the faith. But fear of the Armenian nobles compelled the ruler to apostatise; the disciple was overwhelmed by the storm which he had himself aroused, and perished in the border province of Armenia on the side of Persia, in the country which receives the eastern slopes of Ararat.[1] The legend of Abgar and his correspondence has provoked the attack of modern criticism and has perished in the unequal affray.[2] But the preaching and martyrdom of St. Thaddeus at the hands of King Sanatruk are well known to one of the earliest and most reliable of Armenian historians; and the same authority of the fourth century speaks of the throne of the Armenian pontiffs as the chair of St. Thaddeus.[3] In the absence of conclusive evidence that this saint did not preach in Armenia I shall prefer to suppose that he did.

[1] Moses of Khorene, ii. 30-36, in Langlois, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 95 *seq.*; and Saint-Martin, *Mémoires*, etc. vol. i. p. 127.

[2] Professor Carrière (*La Légende d'Abgar dans l'histoire de Moïse de Khorène*, Paris, 1895) shows that Moses used an Armenian version of the legend of Abgar which commenced to form about the middle of the third century but was subsequently remodelled. The same writer in this work relegates the unfortunate Moses of Khorene, or rather the writer who assumes the mask of this name, to a position *inter deos minores* and to a period not earlier than the eighth century. He had previously been made to step down several places, and was shivering somewhere in the seventh century. See Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften*, Leipzic, 1892, iii. p. 335.

[3] Faustus of Byzantium, iii. 1, and iv. 3, in Langlois, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 210, 237.

The name of St. Bartholomew is often mentioned in connection with that of St. Thaddeus; he is said to have been active in the mountainous region to the south of Lake Van, and to have been flayed alive by the same monarch who put his colleague to death.[1]

These stories were perhaps invented at a comparatively late period. We are on surer ground when we surmise that Christianity was professed in Armenia long anterior to the miraculous cure of King Tiridates and his conversion by St. Gregory. Indeed it would be strange if such had failed to be the case. The interposition of one vast desert between the Holy Land and Armenia is a comparatively modern geographical fact. It is due entirely to bad government. In the first century the two countries were united by a long string of cities, the populous capitals of the low-lying districts. From such centres as Edessa and Nisibis the religion was carried into the border ranges, and over the passes to the plains of the tableland. There the first regions designated by Nature to receive the new culture were situated in the fertile country about the shores of Lake Van, and further east around the margin of Lake Urmi. As early as the middle of the third century we hear of an Armenian bishop, whose name, that of Merujan, would naturally connect him with the great Artsruni family, which possessed extensive territories in the neighbourhood of Van and subsequently furnished to that country a line of mediæval kings.[2] It is also probable that the Archelaus, in whose mouth is placed a disputation with Mani towards the close of the same century (*c.* A.D. 275-277), was bishop of a see not far removed from Van.[3] These early ecclesiastics would almost certainly have made use of the Syriac character, and it is more than likely that many among them were Syrians. Their activity and the circle of their disciples may not have extended to Northern Armenia; although there is presumptive evidence to show that the Christianity of Albania (Eastern Caucasus or Daghestan) and Siunik (country around

[1] Issaverdens, ii. 20, and Saint-Martin, i. p. 131.

[2] Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* vi. 46, 2), speaking of Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 248-265), says, "And in the same manner he writes to those in Armenia over whom Merujan was bishop on the subject of repentance." For the probable connection of this bishop with the Van country see Gelzer (*Die Anfänge*, etc. pp. 171 *seq.*).

[3] Mr. F. C. Conybeare (*Key of Truth*, Oxford, 1898, pp. ci. *seq.*) discusses the locality of the see of Archelaus. He is called in the *Acts of Archelaus* bishop of Karkhar (ἐπίσκοπος Καρχάρων or Κασχάρων), which again is called a city of Mesopotamia, three days' hard riding from castellum Arabion, a fort on the river Stranga, the modern Great Zab. Karkhar was included in the Roman dominions. May it not have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of Sert?

Lake Gökcheh and part of Karabagh) dated back to pre-Gregorian times.[1] It seems at first sight strange that the earliest historians, such as Agathangelus and Faustus, maintain silence upon this older Christianity of their native land; but the edict of Tiridates against the enemies of paganism, preserved in the earliest source of the first of these works, implies the existence of Christians within the limits of his dominions whom the king persecutes after the example of his colleagues at Rome; and the luminous argument of one of the latest scholars in this field carries conviction that the priestly compiler Agathangelus and the monk Faustus had good reasons to ignore this pre-Gregorian Christianity, as being opposed to the character of the later orthodoxy.[2] The big gap left by Armenian writers between the preaching of the apostles and the advent of St. Gregory in narrating the religious history of their country is in itself a suspicious fact; Armenian vanity was satisfied by the connection of their ancestors with the first disciples, and would not be wounded by a temporary relapse; but the laborious methods of modern research are year by year illuminating the interval, and removing the shroud which is perhaps due to ecclesiastical prejudice or fraud.

What was the nature of this early Christianity which made its way in despite of persecution among a barbarous people, professing a crude and perhaps unamiable form of paganism? It is difficult to believe that the religion of the first Christians resembled even remotely the later State religion of the Roman Empire, which under the name of Christianity was spread over the world by the imperial armies and has been bequeathed as a troublesome legacy to the modern world. The origins of this great spiritual movement are veiled in twilight; but from the shadows and uncertain glimmer shines forth a Personality which no doubts and no disappointments can assail. Round this Personality centred many and diverse spiritual conceptions, old as time itself and young as time. They were quickened into new life by the emotional quality of a great example; and they were kept alive and made to focus upon the domain of morality by the daily and intimate intercourse of the members of a brotherhood which should embrace all the creatures of God. It is essential to the fruitfulness of such a community that they should maintain, not internal discipline nor even the agreement of the members upon matters of doctrine among themselves, but

[1] Conybeare, *ibid.* pp. lviii. and ciii. [2] Conybeare, *ibid.* p. cx.

the enthusiasm which prompted their first efforts, a high sense of individual responsibility among the members, and the habit of mutual tolerance, mutual help, mutual consolation, and, above all, of mutual love. The simple ceremonies of the early Church were calculated to promote this spirit. The candidate was admonished by the rite of baptism of the serious nature of the resolve which he had taken to break with the world of sense and appearance, and to become initiated into the higher meaning and purpose by which it is supported and inspired. The fast redressed the balance between the soul and the unruly flesh; and the agapes or love-feasts induced a close communion among the brothers, the necessary corollary to communion with God.

It is scarcely open to doubt that the theoretical side of the religion was not defined by any rigid formula. "Tell me," says Archelaus, "over whom it was that the Holy Spirit descended like a dove. Who is this one whom John baptizes? If He was already perfect, if He was already the Son, if He was already Virtue, the Holy Spirit could not have entered into Him; a kingdom cannot enter into a kingdom. Whose was the voice which came from heaven and bore testimony to Him: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'?" It is clear that the theory of Archelaus was of an adoptionist nature, or, in other words, that he believed Jesus to have been adopted as the Son of God by the descent of the Holy Spirit at the baptism. It is also plain that he was not arguing as an irresponsible disputant, but as giving voice to a strong current of orthodox opinion in his Church, as opposed to the docetic teaching of Mani, representing Jesus as a heavenly spirit assuming the mask of man. Other currents there certainly were in other dioceses than that of Archelaus, and perhaps even among his own flock. But there seems strong reason for believing that the adoptionist Christology was firmly established towards the close of the third century in outlying portions of the Roman Empire and among the Christian communities outside its pale.[1] In Antioch it had been suppressed in the person of Bishop Paul of Samosata after the overthrow of his patron, Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, by the Emperor Aurelian in the year 272. The weight of the Empire was placed in the scale of those tendencies which were to crystallise in the celebrated formula of Nice (A.D. 325): *Christ a very God, begotten of God, but not a creature of God; Son of God, of one nature with*

[1] Conybeare, *ibid.* p. xcvi.

the Father; Who came down from heaven, and took flesh, and became man, and suffered and ascended into heaven; Who was before He was begotten and Who has always been. The same Council of Nice enjoined that the followers of Bishop Paul, or Pauliani, should be re-baptized before admission to the Church. The recalcitrant were driven out into the mountain fastnesses, where after the lapse of several centuries and under the Armenian terminology of Paulicians (Paulikean), the inheritors of their spirit again emerge as a sharp thorn in the side of the orthodox Churches both of Constantinople and of Armenia. The history of the wholesale persecutions of this hardy people by the successors of the Cæsars during the ninth century, and of the successful reprisals which they made, is outside the scope of these remarks; they were driven into the arms of the Mohammedan Power, and their decimation by the imperial armies drove another nail into the coffin which was being prepared for the cancerous body of the Roman Empire.

The connection of the assailants of Armenian orthodoxy, who were known as Paulicians, with their namesakes in the more westerly provinces of the Empire, and of these with Paul of Samosata, has not yet, perhaps, in spite of the luminous researches of the scholar I have quoted, been sufficiently worked out. But we rise from a perusal of his work with the conviction that this connection was at least of the nature of a strong family resemblance dating back to apostolic times. The important document which he has disinterred from the library at Edgmiatsin, and of which the title suggests the hopes that were excited in the breast of Socrates by the pretensions of a certain work of Anaxagoras, affords us a full and detailed, if partially mutilated account of the religious profession of the descendants of these Armenian heretics, as copied from previous copies by a member of the sect in 1782. The same voice which found expression in the disputation of Archelaus rings out from the pages of the *Key of Truth* not less clearly than of old. Jesus is human, though free from sin, until He is baptized by John in the Jordan when He has reached His thirtieth year. Then the Spirit of the Father, descending upon Him, fills Him with the Godhead. After adoption the elect Christ is forthwith led up to the mountain, where He enjoys the mystery of intercourse with the Father for forty days. Baptism must therefore constitute a central event in the life of the Christian, or imitator of Christ.

He must come to baptism after the full awakening of his individual conscience to a knowledge of sin and to the nature of repentance. He must come at mature age, when the heats of youth are passed and his natural instincts have been brought under control. No remission of sins can be effective until he shall have reached this age; nor is baptism under other circumstances more than an empty form. Through baptism he becomes a Christian; and the meal which follows baptism is the symbol of that feast of divine converse with God of which the Son of God, after His adoption, partook. The Holy Ghost enters the catechumen immediately after baptism, and he in effect becomes filled with the spirit of God. The note of aversion to hierarchical grades which is struck in this treatise was no doubt accentuated by the opposition of the sect to the methods of their natural enemies, the Orthodox Church. But their polity—if the word may stand—could in this respect be based on Scripture; and it encouraged that sense of individual responsibility and that habit of self-reliance which are not less effective qualities in the domain of evangelical enterprise than the opposite methods of the Jesuits. The elect of God composed a body of which each member was sublimely conscious of his resolve to pursue a life of ideal justice by communion with the spirit which resided in himself. The example which they set was not that of a selected and exotic hierarchy, but was the example of simple peasants and artisans. When we meet such people, whatever the proximate origin of their particular tenets, we take farewell with a tear and perhaps with a sigh. The Dukhobortsy, of whom I have spoken, would find much in the manual of these Armenian adoptionists with which those resolute children of the Reformation in Europe would cordially agree.

Traces of adoptionism are to be found in the teaching of St. Gregory himself and in the early institutions of the Armenian State Church. We must regret that what is probably the earliest source for our knowledge of that teaching has not yet been translated into one of our Western tongues.[1] In one passage the saint instructs us that the Spirit, coming down at the Baptism, gave to Jesus the glory which became His. John the Baptist is represented as the depositary of the Divine favours conferred of old upon Israel; and it was he who conferred these favours—priesthood, prophecy and kingship—upon our Lord Jesus Christ.[2] It

[1] I refer to the long account contained in the Agathangelus treatise (see note *infra*).

[2] Conybeare, *op. cit.* pp. cxi. cxii.

is, I think, scarcely fair to argue from such passages that the Christianity of Gregory was, as a whole, of an adoptionist type. But it is interesting to remember in this connection that the Armenians celebrate the birth and the baptism of Christ upon one and the same day, the 6th of January. And we may perhaps be surprised to read that in the canons of St. Sahak, one of the pillars of the early State Church (390-439), the feast of the birth of Christ is not included in the list of festivals which are formulated in some detail.[1] We know that St. Gregory himself brought to Armenia with great pomp certain relics of St. John the Baptist; and the number of monasteries in Armenia which are dedicated to the hermit on the Jordan testify to the peculiar veneration in which he has been held. But the influence of orthodoxy in the West must early have restrained these adoptionist tendencies; and it is not improbable that they became identified with that stubborn *heresy of their native land* which is often mentioned and deplored by Armenian writers.[2] There are reasons for supposing that the Messalianism (*meteslenuthiun*) against which is directed a cruel canon of the Armenian Council of Shahapivan, convened in about the middle of the fifth century, was in effect a manifestation of this native heresy, and was identical with the Paulicianism which was specifically stigmatised by a canon of the Council held in Dvin (valley of the Araxes) in the year 719. The first of these synods enacted that priests convicted of Messalianism should be branded on the forehead with the figure of a fox. This particular punishment was the same which was meted out to the Paulicians of Armenia during the persecutions of the eleventh century. The Council of Dvin forbade all intercourse with members of this sect under pain of heavy punishments. The pontiff of the day, John the Philosopher, composed a tract against them, in which he speaks of them as dregs of the incestuous flock of the Paulicians, and informs us that they had been placed under a ban by Nerses Katholikos, under which name he is probably alluding to Nerses III. (640-661).[3] He represents them as joining hands with certain refugees from the Albanian Church (Eastern Caucasus) who were opposed

[1] *Ibid.* pp. clx. clxi.

[2] Letter of Lazar Pharpetzi ap. Conybeare, *op. cit.* p. cviii.; Nerses of Lampron, *ibid.* p. lxxxv.; Isaac Katholikos, *ibid.* Appendix vii. p. 171, and pp. lxxvi. lxxvii.

[3] Conybeare (*op. cit.*) gives the gist of the canon of the Council of Shahapivan (pp. cvii. cviii.) and a translation of the canon of John Katholikos at the Council of Dvin and of portions of his tract (pp. 152 *seq.* in Appendix iv.).

to the use of images. There is at least a family resemblance between these sectaries of the eighth century and those who, under the name of Thonraki (Thonraketzi), suffered persecution in the tenth and eleventh centuries at the hands of the Armenian State Church. Their fiercest adversary, Gregory Magistros, who in the middle of the eleventh century carried fire and sword into their mountain retreats, alludes to them as having imbibed the poison of Paul of Samosata, and adds the important statement that their proximate founder was one Sembat, and that for 170 years they had been continuously admonished and anathematised by successive patriarchs and bishops of Armenia as well as of Albania.[1] Their seats in Armenia were in the radial mountain mass of the Ala Dagh (Thonrak), in Sasun, south of Mush, and in the neighbourhood of Khinis, whence were derived the band who were the object of perhaps the latest persecution, that of 1837-45. It was on this occasion that the documentary proof of their professions was wrested from them and taken to Edgmiatsin. It is the book entitled the *Key of Truth*. The plain of Khinis contained members of this sect into quite recent times; but they suffered severely owing to the customary powers possessed by the heads of the Gregorian community in Turkey to inflict corporal punishment upon members of their own flock. The sectaries were not recognised by the Government as an independent religion. Not many years ago the remnant came over to the American missionaries and embraced the Protestant faith.

II. What does my reader know about the ancient history of Armenia? At least he remembers the wonderful march of Xenophon (401-400 B.C.), who crossed the entire block of the Armenian tableland from the plains of Mesopotamia to the Black Sea. At that time the country was under the overlordship of the Achæmenian king of Persia—that splendid dynasty which was at length destroyed by a great wave from Europe, and of which the latest champion was murdered by a satrap of Bactria after his decisive defeat in the belt of mountains south of Lake Van by Alexander the Great (331 B.C.). The name of the Greek hero is still alive in Southern Armenia, sharing the honours in this respect with Solomon. Perhaps our next familiar memory will be the visit of Hannibal to the court of Artaxias, one of the

[1] Conybeare (*ibid.* Appendices i. to iv. inclusive) details these various persecutions from the original sources; his discussion of the identity of Sembat is a most interesting contribution to the history of Armenia in the Middle Ages (pp. lxi. *seq.*).

numerous governors in the empire of the successors of Alexander, and a ruler whose territory embraced the scene of these travels.[1] Nor are we likely to have forgotten the recoil of the East upon the West which took place under the leadership of the picturesque Mithradates, that strangely composite embodiment of two diverse cultures. Behind Mithradates looms the power of a great king of Armenia, whom, again, we know as a scion of a new dynasty which had arisen in Asia—the Arsakid or Parthian dynasty. With these Arsakid kings of Armenia we are fairly familiar; the Parthian archers ride unrevenged through the polished verse of Horace, and the Arsakids of Persia and Armenia supply the pages of Tacitus with several lively interludes to his throbbing narrative. Some acquaintance with these various events is part of the equipment of most among us—a little less or a little more. We may learn a great deal more of the subsequent history of Armenia; but from what sources shall we collect material for a fuller knowledge of the older period? The Armenian historians are all but worthless; the West was little inquisitive; and even now we can scarcely answer the leading questions: whence the Armenians came to the seats which they have occupied throughout the historical period, and how they fared in culture, in art, or in arms. Upon these subjects the Fool is almost as well instructed as the Wise Man; we search the mists in vain for any definite image; till from among them emerge the thrones of these Arsakids—a Northern or Scythian dynasty, holding Persia as well as Armenia, and crowning a polity which was of a strongly feudal type.[2]

The last of the kings of this dynasty who ruled over Persia was the ally and kinsman of the father of King Tiridates, who was destined, after much vicissitude of fortune, to embrace Christianity and to adopt it as the religion of the State. Ardavan and Chosroes were seated on the thrones of Persia and Armenia, when a prince of the Persian province which is now known under the name of Fars (Shiraz, Persepolis) overthrew the former of these monarchs by a decisive battle, in which Ardavan himself was slain (A.D. 227). The victor, Ardashir, became master of the great Persian monarchy in which the king of Armenia held the second place. His dynasty, the Sasanian, supplanted the

[1] The visit is almost certainly a fable.

[2] For some enquiry into the ethnical affinities and earliest history of the Armenians see Vol. II. of the present work, pp. 67 *seq.*

Arsakids in Persia, and continued to rule until the middle of the seventh century, when it succumbed to the Arabs and to Islam. The Sasanians are familiar to all of us as the permanent enemies of the Roman Empire; and the traveller may be said to be on terms of intimacy with them, for they have left him several monuments of great solidity and architectural merit which mock the squalor of their surroundings at the present day. These, it is true, they erected with the aid of architects and artisans taken captive in their wars with the Empire.[1] Fars was in those days a centre of Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism; and Ardashir was the champion of the fire-worshippers, leaned on their support and closely identified them with his dynasty.

When the news of the death of his kinsman and ally was brought to the Arsakid king of Armenia, profound grief filled the soul of Chosroes. For the moment he was powerless to arrest the triumph of the usurper; but in the following year (A.D. 228) he had matured extensive preparations, and, at the head of an army which comprised Huns from beyond Caucasus as well as other nomads, marched to the frontiers of Persia and laid waste her provinces to the gates of Ctesiphon. Thirsting to avenge his race, he endeavoured to enlist the Parthian satraps in the empire of Ardashir; but these temporising or jealous princelets had thrown in their lot with the Sasanian monarch and could not be induced to stir. He was, however, assisted by a portion of the Medes and by the sons of Ardavan.[2]

For a period of ten years the war was continued by the Armenian potentate; his capital, Vagharshapat,[3] was filled with the booty of successful raids; and, while the temples of the gods throughout Armenia were adorned with costly offerings, their priests received munificent largesses. His fortunes were assisted by an alliance with the Empire; the reigning Cæsar, Alexander

[1] Note especially the interesting incident mentioned by Faustus of Byzantium (v. 4). An ally of the Sasanian king of Persia and a sincere imitator of his example thus addresses his army: "When you get to close quarters with the imperial troops I bid you try your best to make prisoners and avoid bloodshed; we must endeavour to carry them off with us as trophies, and we will make them work for us when we get home as artisans and masons for the construction of our cities and palaces."

[2] Dion Cassius (lxxx. 3) adds this last statement. The preceding are based on Agathangelus (ch. i.). The chronology is that of A. von Gutschmid. See his article *Persia* in *Ency. Brit.* and *Kleine Schriften*, iii. pp. 402 *seq.*

[3] Mommsen (*Provinces of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii. p. 75) tells us, on the authority of Dion Cassius ap. Suidas, that it was the Roman general Priscus who, after *destroying* Artaxata in A.D. 163, laid out the city which was called καινὴ πόλις, or, in Armenian, Nor-Kaghak. This latter name is used by Armenian writers of the fifth century alongside of that of Vagharshapat (Edgmiatsin).

Severus, was alarmed by the rise of the new dynasty, and may have been stung by impertinent messages on the part of Ardashir. A Roman army attacked Persia from the side of Armenia, while two more divisions, one under the leadership of the emperor, assailed other portions of the dominions of the king of kings.[1] If the result of the various engagements may appear ambiguous (231-233), it at least ensured the quiescence of the Persian during several years. Ardashir continued to be harassed by the Armenian ally of the Romans, and resolved to rid himself by any means of his inveterate foe. A Parthian of the blood royal volunteered to execute his desire; he went over with his family as a refugee to the court of Chosroes, who received him with the greatest warmth as a valuable ally. After much pleasant intercourse, when spring came on and the king was preparing to take the field, Anak—for such was his name—bethought himself of the pledge which he had given and of the reward promised by Ardashir. In company with his own brother he succeeded in drawing the king aside, when the two villains despatched him with their swords. The crime was committed at Vagharshapat; the guilty pair fled down the valley, hoping to cross the Araxes at the bridge of Artaxata. But they were cut off by the Armenian horsemen and precipitated into the river. The king, before he expired, gave orders that the family of Anak should forthwith be massacred. Only two little children were rescued from the carnage; one was brought up in Persia, and the other, Gregory, in Greece (A.D. 238).[2]

This unnatural treachery on the part of a Parthian towards the Parthian King of Armenia in the interests of a dynasty which had supplanted the Parthians on the throne of Persia came near to costing the Armenians the permanent loss of their independence. But Ardashir appears to have contented himself with the enjoyment of his personal revenge and of a few raids into Armenian territory. His death occurred a few years after the date of the tragedy (in 241 or 242); and the government of Armenia appears to have been conducted by the nobles, under

[1] Herodian (vi. 5, 6) gives us an account of the war waged by Severus, which is not even noticed by the Armenian historian.

[2] Agathangelus, ch. ii. *Life of St. Gregory*. A. von Gutschmid, who throws doubt upon the statement in the Life that St. Gregory was a son of Anak who was taken to Greece, views with a suspicion, which is quite natural, the words of the historian, "one was taken to Persia, the other to Greece." The territory of the Empire would have been hostile to such protégés of the Persian king. But even if this view be plausible it is surely not necessary to take the words too literally (*Kleine Schriften*, iii. 380).

the nominal sovereignty of the son of Chosroes, by name Tiridates, a child of tender years. It was not until the year 252 or 253 that the successor of Ardashir was enabled to establish his sway over Armenia with the assistance of the uncles of Tiridates, whose cruel treatment compelled the youthful king to take refuge in the Empire.[1] But the triumph of Shapur was not destined to be of long duration; the young Tiridates grew up and prospered in the territory and under the protection of the Romans; and, after distinguishing himself by personal bravery in a campaign of the emperor against the Goths, was restored to his native dominions with the support of a Roman army and perhaps in consequence of the victory of Odaenathus, prince of Palmyra, over the armies of the Persian king (264 or 265).[2] It was in the first year of his restoration that occurred an event which no Armenian can hear related without experiencing a thrill of emotion.

When the son of Anak, the murderer, who was being educated in Roman territory, at Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia, had come to years of discretion, he was informed—perhaps after his marriage and the birth of two children—by the faithful guardian or governess under whose care he had grown up, of the crime committed by his father. Forthwith the pious youth—for he had been brought up in the Christian faith—sallied forth in search of the son of the murdered monarch, and attached himself to the person of the exiled Tiridates, whom he commenced to serve with the utmost zeal. Upon the subject of his origin and parentage Gregory maintained a wise silence; but he was

[1] Elisœus Vardapet (ap. Langlois, *Collection des hists. de l'Arménie*, vol. ii. p. 206) gives the text of a petition despatched by the Armenian nobles to Theodosius II., in which occurs the following passage: . . . "our king Tiridates, while yet a child, was taken to Greek territory and educated there in order to escape from his cruel and parricidal uncles. . . ." On the other hand, Agathangelus leads us to infer that Ardashir took possession of Armenia after the murder of Chosroes and that it was then that the child Tiridates was taken to Greece. In this statement he comes into conflict with Zonaras, who tells us (xii. 21) that it was only in the time of Gallus (252 or 253) that the Persians were able to possess themselves of Armenia, after the flight of the king, Tiridates. It does not seem open to doubt that it was not Ardashir but his successor Shapur I. who became master of Armenia; and these various sources may perhaps be partially reconciled in the manner suggested by Von Gutschmid (*Kleine Schriften*, iii. 405) and adopted in my text. Von Gutschmid interprets *parricidal* in the sense of the uncles having murdered, or helped to murder, not their own father but the father of Tiridates.

[2] The campaign of Odaenathus against Shapur is placed in 265 by Robertson Smith (article *Palmyra* in *Ency. Brit.*) and in 264 by Mommsen (*Provinces of Roman Empire*, ii. 104). We learn from Vopiscus (*Aurel.* 27) that an Armenian contingent was enrolled under the banner of Zenobia against the Emperor Aurelian in 271. What was the attitude of Tiridates during the war?

unable or unwilling to conceal his religion, which at that time happened to be not only unpopular, but subject to persecution.[1] Tiridates in vain endeavoured to wean his servant from the Christian faith; time after time he assailed his constancy with reproach and even with imprisonment; but the decisive moment arrived when he had recovered his long-lost dominions, and stood within the famous temple of Anahid, hard by the present town of Erzinjan. At the feast which followed the sacrifice he gave vent to his emotion in words characteristic of a king. Addressing his trusty counsellor among the assembled guests, he commanded him to make an offering of garlands and leafy branches to the shrine of the great goddess; and, upon his refusal, "How dare you," exclaimed the king, "adore a God whom I do not adore?" The resources of persuasion and torture were without effect upon the will of the Christian; and the monarch was meditating some fresh inducement when one of the nobles approached and said: "Sire, this Gregory is not deserving of life, and hence his unwillingness to live and see the light. We knew not who he was, this long while that he has sojourned among us—but now we know: he is son of that Anak who killed thy royal father, and to whom Armenia owed her exhaustion and captivity." When Tiridates heard these words, he gave orders to bind the martyr and to conduct him to the castle of Artaxata. There he was cast into a pit of great depth, where he was left to perish.

For thirteen years Gregory languished in this noisome dungeon, forgotten by the world but saved from death by the ministrations of a widow who resided in the castle. The hatred or fear of the Christians, so early manifest in the new reign, was emphasised by Tiridates in a pompous edict, which admonished his subjects to beware of the resentment of the gods—of Aramazd, who gave fertility; of Anahid, the goddess defender; of Vahagn, the courageous god. The king had been a witness—so it proceeded—during his sojourn in the Empire, of the great solicitude of the Cæsars for the cult of the national divinities, to the prosperity and glory of their people. Following the example of his august instructors, he bade his subjects, nobles and peasants, to lay hands on any offender against the gods. They should bind him, hand and foot, and bring him to the gate of the palace.

[1] Tiridates was no doubt influenced by the persecutions of the emperors Decius (249-251) and Valerian (253-260). The latter persecution took place during the last three and a half years of the reign of Valerian.

His lands and possessions would be bestowed upon the denouncer. The religious policy of a Decius and a Valerian was at least extended by Tiridates to the holier sphere of legitimate homicide. At the head of the Roman cavalry he rode down the Persian cohorts, and among his levies were reckoned a contingent of Huns. Of lofty stature and broad shoulders, his appearance was the signal of victory; and it became a proverb that Tiridates would destroy the dams in his impatience, and in his courage arrest the rivers in their course towards the sea.

At the point where the historian I have been following was perhaps about to change his theme, and to present the opposite picture of a king and people overtaken by calamities which could only be attributed to the wrath of heaven, the priestly compiler of the Agathangelus treatise has gone to work with his scissors, and has substituted for the more straightforward account of the authority he was using one of those prolix and portentous legends, familiar to the student of hagiographical literature, which were at once the outcome of the diseased fancy of the cloister and the food with which it was sustained. The tale of the advent of the Roman virgins, of the assault upon the modesty of the fairest among them, of their martyrdom and of the transformation of the royal violator into a wild boar, wallowing in mud and eating grass, bears the imprint at every phase of a monkish invention, which was probably stolen in its essential features from the literature of Greek monasteries and adapted to the local conditions at Vagharshapat.[1] But carelessness or want of skill on

[1] Agathangelus is our earliest authority for the reign of Tiridates and for the events connected with the conversion of the Armenians as a nation to Christianity. But the scholars who examined this precious treatise were impressed with the scale and frequency of the interpolations to which the original text appeared to have been subjected; and partly for this reason, partly owing to the former ascendency of Moses of Khorene, full use was not made of the work. In 1877 there appeared in the pages of a German periodical one of those masterpieces of the higher criticism of which German writers now appear to have a monopoly. It is entitled *Agathangelos*, by Alfred von Gutschmid, and it has been incorporated in the collected edition of Von Gutschmid's minor works (*Kleine Schriften von A. von Gutschmid*, Leipzic, 1892, vol. iii. pp. 339 *seq.*). The author laboured under the disadvantage of not being an Armenian scholar; but he has nevertheless succeeded in discriminating between the various sources from which the treatise, as it has come down to us, has been built up. They are- 1. An earliest source which we may call the *Life of St. Gregory*, and which also contains an account, running parallel, of the reigns of Chosroes and Tiridates down to the conversion of the latter. Von Gutschmid thinks that this writing was composed in Armenian during the pontificate of Sahak, or Isaac, the Great (A.D. 391-442). It seems more probable, however, that it was originally written in Greek or Syriac and subsequently translated into Armenian. 2. A later piece which we may distinguish as the *Acts of St. Gregory and of St. Ripsime and her Companions.* It is a hagiograph, which Von Gutschmid supposes to have been written about the year 450. It seems to me, however, that a certain passage in Faustus

the part of the compiler has happily preserved for us a fragment of the original story, from which we learn that the Armenians were afflicted by an extraordinary outbreak of diverse diseases: leprosy, palsy, dropsy, madness.[1] We are given to infer that the king himself was visited by some grave malady, and that he was cured in a miraculous manner upon the appearance and at the hands of Gregory, who had long been numbered among the dead.[2]

of Byzantium (iii. 13, in Langlois' translation, "jusqu'à changer même l'image de l'homme en une figure de bête") points to that author having been acquainted with the Acts; at all events he is familiar with the legend of the Ripsimians. Faustus appears to have written 395-416. To the Acts portion of the Agathangelus treatise belongs a long and possibly independent piece which contains the teaching of St. Gregory; but neither the Greek version nor the extant translations include it, and I am not aware that any consecutive account of its contents has yet appeared. In the Armenian text this last piece takes up over one-half of the treatise as a whole. And finally—3. *The Vision or Apocalypse of St. Gregory*, in which the saint receives the Divine mandate to build the church at Edgmiatsin. This piece, together with the prologue and epilogue to the whole work, was probably added by a priest of Vagharshapat (Edgmiatsin), who edited the treatise and gave it its present form, publishing it under the pseudonym of Agathangelus. Von Gutschmid thinks that the work as a whole may be assigned to the period of Persian persecution (A.D. 452-456). The fact that Lazar Pharpetzi displays an intimate acquaintance with it under the name of Agathangelus shows that it cannot be placed later than about the close of the fifth century. I do not know, however, that Lazar shows a knowledge of the Apocalypse, or that the statement contained in a Paris MS. can be conclusively disproved, that the Armenian text which has come down to us is a translation made in the seventh century, at the time of the discovery under Komitas of the relics of St. Ripsime, from a Greek original. Von Gutschmid, however, argues against this view (pp. 354 *seq.*). Ter-Mikelean (*Die armenische Kirche*, p. 5) supports the view that the work was translated at the close of the fourth century by Koriun from a Greek original (see Langlois, vol. ii. *Introduction to Koriun*, p. 4); but Von Gutschmid has shown that certain passages have been borrowed from Koriun, and until the Armenian text has been subjected to a searching philological criticism we are not safe in saying more than this. The student will find the various pieces enumerated above distinguished one from another, passage by passage, in the table given by Von Gutschmid (pp. 375 *seq.*). The latest edition of our present Greek text, which is a translation from the Armenian, is that of De Lagarde (Gottingen, 1887), but the references given in my notes are to that of Langlois. The best translation is that of the Mekhitarists in Italian (Venice, 1843). The French translation in Langlois omits some of the most important passages. As regards the historical importance of the pieces, Von Gutschmid concludes that the Life may be regarded as a source of absolute reliability for the conversion of the king and for the events in Armenia which succeeded the conversion. As regards what took place before that event, it is in the main reliable, although interwoven with legend. The Acts, on the other hand, and the Apocalypse are as good as useless as historical material.

The scholarly study of Von Gutschmid rendered possible Professor Gelzer's profound and brilliant essay, *Die Anfange der armenischen Kirche*, to which I have already alluded (p. 277, note 1) and in which he reviews the work of the Armenian writer known to us under the name of Faustus of Byzantium.

[1] See p. 145 of the Italian translation of Agathangelus. Von Gutschmid (*Kleine Schriften*, iii. 358) is careful to point out the discrepancy in the two sources. While the Acts speak of possession by devils as the malady with which the people of Vagharshapat were afflicted and which caused them to be transformed into animals, the Life only mentions "possession" as one of the diseases which are enumerated.

[2] See the Italian translation, p. 153.

We are told how, from all parts of Armenia, the people flocked to the province of Ararat, to Vagharshapat, the royal residence; how they were cured of their various disorders; and how king and people embraced the faith in the service of which the saintly doctor had effected their cure. The testimony of the historian is supported by a Greek writer of the fifth century, who attributes the conversion of King Tiridates to a miracle.[1]

It is not unlikely that the mind of the monarch was influenced by some occurrence of the nature deducible from the mangled narrative of the original biographer. Tiridates was a full-blooded heathen, prone to all forms of superstition, and free from any taint of rationalising tendencies. Yet we may suspect that the number and power of the Armenian Christians prior to his conversion loomed much larger in the consciousness of himself and of his contemporaries than we are led to suppose by Armenian histories. Was he desirous of finding a counterpoise to the Mazdaism of his Persian enemy, which had been elevated by the Sasanians into a strongly organised State religion and identified with the throne? Was he impressed with the cohesion of the Christians among themselves, and by the contrast thus offered to the fissiparous tendencies of his feudal polity? Was the widow in the castle of Artaxata a Christian, and was the old authority of the prisoner in the king's counsels exploited by her co-religionists at an opportune moment, when his wisdom should appear restored, as by a miracle, to a necessitous land? If such questions be mere matters of surmise, we at least know that at the date of the conversion the Roman Empire was hesitating in a policy towards the Christians, and that the repressive measures of a Valerian were no longer in repute.[2] The Armenian king became a convert before their revival under Diocletian (284-305); and Christianity was adopted as the religion of the State in Armenia some thirty years prior to its triumph in the West by the decisive action of the Milvian Bridge (312), and over a hundred years before the edicts of Theodosius the First against the practice of paganism.[3]

[1] Sozomen, ii. 8. He places the conversion before Constantine, but does not give the exact date.

[2] "With Gallienus (260) there begins for the Christians a long period of peace, lasting about forty years" (Moeller, *History of the Christian Church*, A.D. 1-600, London, 1892, p. 196).

[3] It seems impossible to precise the date of the conversion of Tiridates. The author of the Life in Agathangelus allows thirteen years for the captivity of Gregory, who was imprisoned in the first year of the restoration. But I am not aware that we are able to fix this latter date. The conversion probably occurred about the year 280.

The measures taken by Tiridates and his statesman and mentor, Gregory, to supplant polytheism by Christianity were such as might have excited the envy of a Cæsar, and which only an Eastern despot could hope to enforce. From Vagharshapat the king proceeded down the valley to Artaxata at the head of the troops which garrisoned the capital. On the way he set fire to the temple of the god Dir, from whom he is said to have derived his name (Dirtad or gift of Dir).[1] In a graphic figure our historian likens the priests and their followers to demons; and he relates how, some on horseback, others on foot, and all fully armed, they hurried hither and thither, gesticulating and screaming, until they were put to flight. But the swarm took refuge in the temple of Anahid at Artaxata, where from the roof they discharged arrows and precipitated a hail of stones upon the advancing host. Gregory, making the sign of the Cross, ran to the gate of the edifice, which dissolved into its foundations, wreathed in flames. The dusky troop vanished like a puff of smoke from the face of the land, to Caucasus and Chaldia[2] in the north. The treasures of the temple were distributed among the needy; some of the priests were selected or accepted for the service of the Church, to which body was also allotted the confiscated land.

King and minister travelled the country in all directions, preaching,[3] overthrowing temples and endowing the Church with their rich possessions. One after another the most famous sanctuaries succumbed to the royal zeal: the fane of Aramazd, father of the gods, at Ani, the modern Kemakh, the burial-place of the kings; that of Nanea, daughter of Aramazd, at Til, beyond the Western Euphrates; the temple of Mithra, son of Aramazd, at Pakharij in Terjan, and the temple of Barshamin at Tortan. A more personal delight may have thrilled the saint—if saints be capable of such emotions—as he shattered the golden statue of the goddess Anahid at Erzinjan, and watched the lofty walls of her numerous shrines sinking to the level of the ground. They were the most magnificent of all the sacred edifices in Armenia, and they were defended to the last by quite an army of dusky foes. Within the vacant enclosures was erected the sign of the Cross.

Months and perhaps years were occupied in the overthrow of

[1] Emin, *Recherches sur le paganisme arménien*, p. 20, note 1.
[2] The Pontic regions.
[3] The king himself preached (Agathangelus, *Life of St. Gregory*, in p. 253 of the Italian translation).

these strongholds of paganism;[1] but it was not until after the return of Gregory from ordination at Cæsarea of Cappadocia, whither he was escorted by sixteen of the great nobles and conducted in a car drawn by white mules,[2] that king and people received at the hands of the minister, no longer a layman, the crowning benefit of baptism. The first act of Gregory upon his return to his native country was to destroy the temples of Astishat in the province of Taron (Mush), which lay upon his road and which were still frequented. These were three in number and dedicated to three gods. The first was the shrine of Vahagn, destroyer of serpents; the second belonged to Anahid, the golden mother; while the third preserved the cult of the goddess Astghik, the Aphrodite of the fair mythology of Greece. They were situated on the summit of Mount Karke, close to the Euphrates, and in full view of the chain of the Taurus mountains. The place was called Astishat because of the frequent sacrifices which were offered up; and it was there that the kings of Armenia had been wont to appease the gods. The saint was carrying with him certain relics obtained in Roman territory, namely a parcel of the bones of St. John the Baptist and of those of the holy martyr Athenogenes.[3] When his numerous party had

[1] I insert the word "years" in deference to Professor Gelzer, who argues (*Die Anfänge*, etc., p. 166) that if the conversion took place about the year 280, the journey to Cæsarea could scarcely have been undertaken before 285-290. He is wishing to show that the statements contained in a portion of the Agathangelus treatise ascribed by Von Gutschmid to the less reliable source, viz. the Acts, to the effect that St. Gregory was ordained by Leontius, archbishop of Cæsarea, may quite well be true. We know that Leontius subscribed the Council of Nice (325); and his pontificate must have covered a period of forty-five years if St. Gregory was ordained by him in or about the year 280. The Life mentions the visit of Gregory to Cæsarea but not the name of Leontius; and Von Gutschmid, while he regards the visit as historical, views with suspicion the connection with that particular prelate (*Kleine Schriften*, iii. pp. 415 and 418). That seems to me the sensible view. We learn from an independent source (Gelas. Cyzic. ii. 36, ap. Mansi, ii. p. 929) that in the year 325 and during the lifetime of Saint Gregory and Leontius, Great Armenia was in ecclesiastical subordination to Cæsarea; and the link with the capital of Cappadocia was maintained until the death of the Katholikos Nerses I. about the year 374 (cp. Faustus, v. 29). The later story, to the effect that Tiridates received Christianity from the bishop of Rome (so in the petition of the Armenians in the year 450 to Theodosius, ap. Elisœus in Langlois, ii. 206), is plainly a story with a purpose and must therefore be viewed with suspicion.

[2] The car with the white mules is mentioned in the Life, and the escort of sixteen princes in the Acts.

[3] A bishop of Sivas with this name was martyred under Diocletian; but this saint will not suit our chronology. Certain features in connection with the cult of the saint—a hind is offered up to him on his name day—have suggested to Von Gutschmid (*Kleine Schriften*, iii. 414) that Athenogenes was a heathen god of the chase, converted in comparatively remote times into a Christian martyr. A local cult of this nature seems to have attached to Herakles in certain countries; therefore it might quite well have been natural for Gregory to supplant the worship of his Armenian counterpart, Vahagn,

arrived in front of the temples, and were not further from the Euphrates than a space which a horseman would cover in two careers of his steed, the white mules of the car with the relics came to a standstill in the hollow of a valley, where there was a little water and which still remained to be crossed. Efforts were being made in vain to induce them to proceed, when an angel appeared to Gregory and signified the Divine Will. The relics should be deposited upon the spot where they were stationed. Forthwith the entire company busied themselves with the erection of a chapel, where in due course the bones of the saints were laid to rest. The next care of pontiff and princes was to demolish the temples of the idols which stood above the valley. In their place Gregory laid the foundations of a church, and erected an altar to the glory of God.[1] It was here that he first commenced to build churches, and to erect altars in the name of Christ. For twenty days he sojourned on the spot; and having prepared fonts for baptism, baptized first the great princes who had journeyed with him, and next the people to the number of over a hundred and ninety thousand. In the chapel of St. John and Athenogenes he dispensed the holy sacrament; and it was ordained that an annual festival should be celebrated in that place in honour of the saints and in commemoration of the first foundation of Christian churches and ordination of Christian priests. From Astishat the Illuminator journeyed to Bagaran in the province of Ararat; but it was at the foot of Mount Nepat and on the banks of the river Euphrates that the son of Anak administered to king and assembled army the regenerating rite. A church was erected upon the site and endowed with a remnant of the relics; and a festival was appointed in honour of the saints in place of that of Amanor, at the season of first fruits.[2]

at Astishat with that of Athenogenes, the saint corresponding to the god of the chase. This is ingenious but not convincing. The hunting features in the cult of Athenogenes may surely have been *derived from* his worship at Astishat in place of Vahagn (Herakles).

[1] I adopt the Greek version of Agathangelus in this passage in preference to the Armenian text, which has "he laid the foundations of the church and erected an altar to the *glory of Christ*. It was here that he first commenced to build churches, and erected an altar in the *name of the Holy Trinity* and added a baptistery." See Gelzer (*Die Anfänge*, etc., p. 129).

[2] After a second perusal of the passages in Agathangelus and Faustus (in Langlois: Agathangelus, cxiv. and cxv.; Faustus, iii. and iv. 14), I do not hesitate to identify the site of the temples of Astishat—Mount Karke, in face of the great range, Taurus—with the immediate surroundings of the present cloister of Surb Karapet (see Vol. II. p. 177). The view which I shall offer from the terrace of that famous monastery (Fig. 157) will be the view which excited the cupidity of the eunuch Hair; the ash trees in the

It would not be easy to find an account equally graphic and circumstantial of the methods employed to substitute Christianity for polytheism, which, although, no doubt, they were less violent and more gradually operative in more civilised countries, were yet essentially similar. We learn from the Armenian writer how the churches rose on the sites of the temples, how the ancient festival in honour of the god was converted into the festival of a martyr, and how, in fact, while the myth was new and unfamiliar, much of the ritual and all the surroundings remained the same. The sacred groves were taken by storm amid scenes of carnage which our historian skilfully veils by the use of metaphor. The lands and slaves of the heathen fanes were made over to the Church; the number of the chapels exceeded that of the shrines which had been demolished, and separate endowments were made to all by royal decree. The children of the priests were distributed among the newly founded seminaries, where they were instructed in the Greek and Syriac languages and introduced to the literature of the Church. Their loyalty to the new religion was stimulated by an annual salary; and the most deserving among them were consecrated bishops. Such was the nature of the revolution accomplished by St. Gregory with a thoroughness and decision which we cannot but admire. The old cult was not extinguished, but irremediably disabled; it lurked even in the highest places, and we hear of a queen of Armenia who encouraged the polytheists to assassinate Verthanes, the son and successor of St. Gregory.[1] Many Armenians practised Christianity as a mere matter of form, regarding it as an aberration of the human intelligence to which they had been compelled to subscribe.[2] Those who had embraced the faith with conviction were limited to the circles which spoke Greek or Syriac, or were at least fairly familiar with those idioms.[3] Yet Gregory preached to the Armenians in the Armenian language.[4] Under the shadow of night the devotees of the old religion would adore

foreground may be the descendants of the *hatzeatz-drakht* or garden of ash trees; finally, the confluence of rivers, overgrown with thick forest, to which the eunuch descended and where he met his death, may be represented by the still wooded banks of the Murad in the valley of Charbahur. The identification of the scene of the events narrated in the text with the present monastery of Surb Karapet may be found in the geography attributed to Vardan in Saint Martin (*Mémoires*, etc., vol. ii. p. 431).

The baptism of Tiridates probably took place on the banks of the Upper Murad upon the site of another existing cloister of Surb Karapet, also called Uch Kilisa, near Diadin (see Smith and Dwight, *Missionary Researches*, p. 417).

[1] Faustus, iii. 3. [2] Faustus, iii. 13. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] Agathangelus, *Life of St Gregory*, sec. 158.

their divinities and chant the tempestuous epics of their native land.[1] Years elapsed before they would abandon their lamentations for the dead, a practice specially repugnant to the Christian spirit.[2] Still, in spite of the constant undercurrent and frequent ebullitions of paganism, the institutions of the Illuminator were never jeopardised by a decisive relapse. The religion which he invested with all the authority of the State became inextricably interwoven with the self-consciousness of the Armenian nation, and derived from their inveterate obstinacy or admirable heroism a stability which hardened the more it was threatened from without.

Then, as now, the keystone of the ecclesiastical edifice was the person of the katholikos. I do not know that we can instance among Christian organisations any counterpart of this high office. Beside it that of the king seems mere fable and tinsel. The title itself was unimportant and unpretentious, designating as it did among the Christians of the East an archbishop with plenary powers (*ad universalitatem causarum*), such as were necessary in countries removed by distance from the hierarchical centres. It is applied by our earliest extant authority to St. Gregory;[3] and, so moderate are the claims or pronounced the hierarchical spirit of his successor, Faustus, that he coins the cumbrous superlative, katholikos of katholikoi, to express the superior dignity of the metropolitan of Cæsarea.[4] But, whatever grade in the army of the Church may have been assigned to him by his clerical colleagues, the position occupied in his native country by the katholikos of Armenia was one of extraordinary glamour. The office was hereditary in the family of the Illuminator; and that family had been endowed with territories extending over fifteen provinces and comprising several princely residences.[5] The pontifical palace was at Astishat, in the neighbourhood of the mother-church of Armenia and the chapels of St. John the Baptist and of St. Athenogenes. From the spacious terrace expanded a landscape which aroused the envy of the richest laymen and which was only commensurate with a fraction of the

[1] Faustus, iii. 13.

[2] Faustus, v. 31. "The obsequies of the dead were conducted amid loud lamentations, accompanied by trumpets, guitars and harps. Monstrous dances took place, men and women, with bangles on their arms and painted faces, giving themselves up to every kind of abomination." The picture is coloured by malice, but is vivid.

[3] Agathangelus, *Life of St. Gregory*, sec. 169.

[4] Faustus, iv. 4.

[5] Faustus, iv. 14. It seems plain from this chapter that these domains had been bestowed upon the family of Gregory by Tiridates and his successors.

pontifical possessions. When the scions of the family were unwilling to sustain the burden of the office it was entrusted to prominent clerics of the church at Astishat, while the unworthy heirs pursued the vocation of arms or the attractions of pleasure, surrounded by a court which polluted the sanctity of the pontifical residence.[1] It was customary for the descendants of Gregory to marry into the king's family, and they were accorded many of the honours due to royalty alone. As often as the king aroused and probably deserved the censure of the katholikos, that spiritual castigation was unflinchingly enforced. In a vacancy of the Chair, owing to failure in the line or renunciation on the part of the heirs, it was not the priesthood who chose the successor but the king, the nobles and the army.[2] In these several respects the office was identified with the existing institutions of the country, and it was perhaps indeed modelled upon that of the high priest among the polytheists and the Jews.[3] But, however great was the prestige derived from such a splendid establishment and from the fame of the first occupant of the Chair, the hold of the pontificate upon the imagination of later generations was derived from a less antique and more constantly operative source. Two descendants of the Illuminator, one in the fourth, the other in the fifth century, added new and peculiar lustre to the institution. Nerses the First introduced the refinements of hierarchical government; Sahak the Great

[1] Faustus, iii. 15 and 19. The profane delinquents were named Pap and Athenogenes, and the makeshift office-bearers Daniel the Syrian, Pharen and Shahak. The two last-named were formally invested with the office and sent to Cæsarea to be consecrated.

[2] Note especially the election of Nerses I., a descendant of St. Gregory who was loth to accept the office. "The numerous troops of all Armenia demanded and proclaimed Nerses as katholikos . . . the entire assembly commenced to cry with a loud voice, 'It is Nerses who must be our pastor.' Nerses refused to accept the mandate, of which he professed himself unworthy. Nevertheless the assembly persisted in their resolution and continued to cry before the king, 'No one except Nerses shall be our pastor; nobody but he shall occupy the holy chair!'" The whole chapter (Faustus, iv. 3) is well worth reading, and contains some very vivid portraiture. Nerses was a layman and was raised to the pontificate in one day. He was then sent to Cæsarea to be formally consecrated.

[3] Professor Gelzer pertinently observes (*Die Anfänge*, etc., p. 148) that the Armenian kings in pagan times had been in the practice of placing their own near relatives in priestly offices, and quotes Strabo to the effect that in the neighbouring provinces of Cappadocia and Pontus the high priest was δεύτερος κατὰ τίμην μετὰ βασιλέα, or second in rank after the king. On the other hand, traces of Jewish custom are to be found in the existence of a second priestly House in Armenia during the early period of Christianity, who in a sense were rivals of the House of the Illuminator. I allude to the House of Albianus. It must not be forgotten that there were extensive settlements of Jews in Armenia at this period, brought thither by the Armenian king Tigranes (Faustus, iv. 55).

gave to the people an alphabet of their own. The throne of the successors of Tiridates crumbled away in the course of about a century from the death of the first Christian monarch; that of the successors of St. Gregory has weathered the storms of sixteen centuries and remains a solid and impressive monument at the present day.

Two events of high importance remain to be mentioned in this brief survey of the momentous revolution carried through by the great king and his great minister. The first is the journey to Europe. The reciprocal advantage of the ancient alliance between Tiridates and the Empire had been experienced in the campaigns which were waged by the Cæsar Galerius against the Persians (A.D. 296 and 297); and the memory of comradeship in arms may have preserved the first Christian State from incurring the active displeasure of the colleague of Diocletian during the subsequent onslaughts upon the Christian religion (303-311). But the Cæsar Maximin was less patient or more oblivious, and their new faith cost the Armenians a war (312).[1] The advent of Constantine averted their ruin and set the seal of political wisdom upon the spiritual policy of their monarch; and it was only natural that the two exalted instruments of the Christian profession should desire to profit in every sense by the Christian sympathies of so great a prince. The journey of Gregory and Tiridates to the court of Constantine has been regarded as unauthentic by a competent authority; yet it probably took place. The meeting perhaps occurred in Serdica, a residence of the emperor in Illyria, and it was attended by the friend and relation of Constantine, Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia. The highest honours were paid to the aged visitors, and the emperor prostrated himself at the feet of the saint. The pair were escorted with much pomp to their native country, having still further strengthened the link which attached them to their powerful neighbours, and perhaps concluded a formal treaty.[2]

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* ix. 8. For the date see Von Gutschmid (*Kleine Schriften*, iii. p. 412).

[2] The doubts of Von Gutschmid would perhaps have been removed by the more correct translation given by Professor Gelzer of the passage relating to the journey in Agathangelus and by his editing of the context. The passage should read, "By land and sea they proceeded with haste until they reached the State of the Italians and the land of the Dalmatians and arrived in the imperial city of the Romans." Dalmatia is the *præfectura per Illyricum.* The name of the bishop is given in the text of Langlois as Sylvester, and as Eusebius in the Greek translation. The best Armenian MS. also has Eusebius. The name of Sylvester appears to have been substituted much later, when

The second event reposes upon less questionable evidence; it is the participation of the Armenian Church in the deliberations of the Council of Nice (325), and her formal subscription of its acts. The great age of Gregory may well have deterred him from personal attendance; his younger son Aristakes represented the Armenians in the famous assembly. Upon his return he communicated the canons to his father, who accepted them and contributed a few additions. The formula of Nice with its uncompromising identification of Christ with God was adopted as the dogmatic base of the State religion.[1]

III. A general impression which one receives from the perusal of the early histories is that the Armenians of the fourth century were not far removed from barbarism. The king might here and there set up a copy of a classical building; but I should doubt whether he could have left us any monument which might approach the originality of the creations of the Bagratid sovereigns

the "imperial city of the Romans" was very naturally identified with Rome and the prelate with the bishop of Rome.

My friend Mr. F. C. Conybeare calls my attention to the interesting circumstance that the Armenian equivalent for Latin is Dalmatian. Thus in their Gospels it is said that the title King of the Jews was inscribed on the cross in Hebrew, Greek, and *in Dalmatian*.

[1] And yet the ὁμοούσιον was not incorporated into the Armenian Creed! But it does not appear that this omission was intentional. The creed already in use was allowed to stand. I confess to a feeling of astonishment, having regard to the unequivocal language in which the author of the Life attests the acceptance of the Council; but the canons could not have been much appreciated in Armenia at the time if we are to credit Koriun's statement that he himself, with Ghevond and Eznik, brought authentic copies of them to Armenia in the fifth century (Biography of Mesrop in Langlois' *Collection*, vol. ii. p. 12). Mr. F. C. Conybeare informs me that the Creed of Nice was only communicated to the Armenian diaspora in Persia and Southern Mesopotamia by the Katholikos Papken after the Council of Dvin, *c.* 490 A.D. It was rejected by that diaspora as in contradiction with their already established Ebionite or Adoptionist tenets (see Letter-book of the Patriarchs, MS. of the Armenian Father, St. Anthony, in Stambul).

Dr. Arshak Ter-Mikelean prints the Armenian and Nicene creeds side by side and accompanies them with some interesting remarks (*Die armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zur byzantinischen*, Leipzig, 1892, p. 22 *seq.*). The statement of Agathangelus (*Life of St. Gregory*), that King Tiridates acted in concert with St. Gregory in making certain additions to the canons must be received with caution, although such additions do appear to have been actually made (see the note of the Mekhitarists to the Italian translation of Agathangelus, p. 196). His son, Chosroes II., appears to have come to the throne in 314. As neither Agathangelus nor Faustus gives us dates, and as the most monstrous anachronisms occur in both treatises, one may do pretty well what one likes with the chronology. I should even mistrust them when they assign a given number of years for a particular period. In the East at the present day *ten years* means more than one and less than twenty years; and I see no reason to credit the old historians with much greater precision of statement. That the Armenians took part in the Council of Nice is attested by Agathangelus, Faustus, Moses of Khorene, etc., and also by the list of signatures of participants in the Council:—*Armeniæ majoris Aristarces, Threnius Diosponti* (Von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften*, iii. 415). But we may reasonably doubt that either Tiridates or St. Gregory was alive at the time.

in the Middle Ages. Very few among his subjects had a knowledge of Greek and Syriac, still less of Latin, the languages of the literature of their day. The Scriptures—that mine of knowledge—were read in the Syriac or Greek versions to congregations of which not even the most intelligent members could profit by the service.[1] Identity of interests with the Empire on the score of culture was a bond which, I suppose, scarcely existed in that age; and, alas, when at length it became a reality, how fragile it proved—how fragile such bonds have always proved! Still, although we must be careful in thinking of the Armenians of the fourth century as we might think of their descendants in the tenth, the ties which should have united them to their powerful neighbours on the west were of a nature which could appeal to all. There was the tie of a common religion, which either nation had recently adopted and subscribed at a joint conference. Both were threatened by a common enemy—the fire-worshippers of Persia, enlisting all the resources of the further East. From that Persian dynasty the Armenian monarchs were separated by difference of origin and by a blood feud, unmitigated by the lapse of time. They had been restored to their possessions by the Roman power. A great king and a great statesman, in whom they recognised a saint, had crowned their life work by the conclusion of an alliance with Rome which in no previous age could have reposed upon so stable a base. Shall we therefore be edified by the spectacle of their successors following in their footsteps, patiently waiving differences, insisting upon elements of union, ranging themselves upon the side of Christianity and civilisation and fighting their battles in such sacred causes as these?

King Tiridates was followed on the throne by his son Chosroes the Little, to whom is ascribed a reign of nine years.[2] If perhaps

[1] Lazar Pharpetzi, chs. x. and xi.; Moses of Khorene, iii. 36.

[2] Moses of Khorene, iii. 10. The following chronology (which is not that of Moses) is taken from Saint Martin (apud Lebeau, *Hist. du Bas-Empire*). I attach to it a parallel list of the contemporary Greek Emperors and a similar column for the Sasanian monarchs, which is proudly filled by a single name. The date of Sapor II. rests on the authority of Th. Nöldeke.

Armenian Arsakid Kings.		*Roman Emperors.*		*Persian Sasanian Kings.*	
Chosroes II. (the Little)	314-322	Death of Constantine	337	Shapur II. (succeeds as an infant)	310-379
Tiran	322-337	Constantius	337-361		
Arshak	338-367	Julian	361-363		
Pap	369-374	Valens	364-378		
		Theodosius (the Great)	379-395		

his stature was small and his body feeble, he at least possessed the merit of keeping well with the successor of Gregory, whom his queen in vain endeavoured to remove from the world. His name is therefore in favour with the priestly historian, who indeed narrates the events of this period in a somewhat fabulous manner, but presents us with a picture of contemporary society which is lifelike and full of movement and colour.[1] That the early years of the reign were not disturbed by a war with Persia was perhaps due to the youth of the Persian monarch; but the storm burst before its close. After sustaining with success the brunt of a Hunnish invasion—in which, however, the capital, Vagharshapat, was temporarily lost—Chosroes was called to the defence of his eastern frontiers by the approach of a Persian army. The first encounter took place near the shores of Lake Van, and resulted in a victory for the Armenians. The assistance of imperial troops[2] may have nerved the king's resistance, which continued until the close of his life. With Chosroes is contemporary the pontificate of Verthanes, the eldest son of the Illuminator. That saintly personage did not long survive the successor of Tiridates; but he may have lived to confirm the reign of his son Tiran, and he was perhaps instrumental in placing him upon the throne.[3]

It is during the rule of Tiran that we observe for the first time manifestations of that bitter rivalry between the head of the Church and the head of the State which was destined, as much, perhaps, as any other cause, to bring about the downfall of the dynasty. Such an outcome of the ecclesiastical institutions of the first Christian monarch might indeed have been foreseen. Had Armenia not been exposed to a struggle for life and death with enemies from without, her statesmen might well have solved the problem of this dangerous dualism without endangering the safety of the nation. Enveloped as they were in such a struggle, the only policy was to postpone the issue; King Tiran chose the opposite course. He had given his daughter in marriage to the son of Verthanes, Yusik; but after the experience of a single night

[1] Faustus wrote *c.* A.D. 395-416.

[2] Moses of Khorene (iii. 10) places the king at the head of a Greek army. The patriotism of Faustus was stronger than his veracity, and he maintains a discreet silence upon this circumstance.

[3] The first statement in this sentence is all that we learn from Faustus; the two last rest on the authority of Moses of Khorene, who assigns the death of Verthanes to the third year of Tiran. Aristakes, the younger son of St. Gregory, and his successor in the functions of the pontifical office during the closing years of the life of the saint, was assassinated, apparently by a Roman prefect, at an uncertain date.

the youth deserted his bride, in apprehension, it is said, of the terrible progeny which she was destined to give to the world. Such conduct and such explanations could scarcely have satisfied her royal parents; but the princess died after giving birth to twin sons. Upon the death of Verthanes, Yusik was placed in the pontifical chair, the ceremony of his installation being performed at Artaxata. The king was a lukewarm Christian and, perhaps, an inveterate sinner; the katholikos was at once pious and severe. A long feud and partial estrangements resulted in an open rupture; and, when the sovereign on a certain feast day was about to attend divine service, he was publicly denounced by the enraged prelate and forbidden to enter the church. Yusik was beaten to death under royal orders; and a similar fate befell the saintly bishop of Astishat, who, although a Syrian and not a member of the family of St. Gregory, was summoned by king and nobles to fill the vacancy in the Chair. We are told that King Tiran lived on friendly terms with Persia; however this may be, he contrived to fall into the hands of these powerful neighbours, who put out his eyes and led him to the feet of their master.

A deputation of the great barons was forthwith despatched to Constantinople in order to obtain succour from the emperor. Before their return a Persian army was let loose upon Armenia, and those of the inhabitants of every rank who were able to make good their escape took refuge upon Greek territory. The arrival of imperial troops—it is said with the emperor at their head—was shortly followed by a decisive victory and the capture of the harem of the Persian king. That potentate was summoned to restore Tiran to his native country; but, upon the refusal of his blind prisoner to undertake the office, the son of Tiran, Arshak, was placed upon the throne. Two occurrences in the reign of this prince, as it is described by Faustus, may be identified with known events. The one is his connection with the great massacre of Christians in Persia which took place during the reign of Shapur.[1] Our historian attributes the wrath of the Persian monarch to the monstrous perfidy of the Christian sovereign of Armenia. The other is the conclusion of a treaty between the Roman and Persian empires, of which a provision was the engagement on the part of the former power not to offer any assistance to Arshak. These terms are familiar to us from other sources as having been wrung

[1] In A.D. 339-340, according to Th. Nöldeke (article *Persia: Sasanians*, in *Ency. Brit.*).

from the commander of the luckless Roman army after the death of Julian.[1]

The reign of Arshak is, indeed, contemporary with the great wars which were waged by Shapur with the power which disputed his supremacy over the East. However little credit we may attach to the narrative of the Armenian historian, it is at least plain that a king who owed his throne to the Cæsars was often their enemy and never their loyal ally. We are told, indeed, that on one occasion his armies violated the Roman territory and advanced as far as Angora; on another that the king himself led his troops against those of the Empire, and fell upon them as they were preparing to receive a Persian attack. When the duel was being waged most fiercely he maintained an attitude of expectant neutrality, waiting to see which of the antagonists would offer him the best terms. The only palliation which we may discover for such a course of outrageous conduct is derived from the obscure notice of a religious persecution, directed against the Armenian p[illegible], Nerses, by one of the successors of Constantine. Yet that [illegible] true wisdom enjoined resistance to the Persians at a moment when it might well have seemed a desperate course. The king, left to his fate by the provision in the Roman treaty, maintained for awhile a courageous front to the Persian onslaught. But he was at length compelled to sue for peace and to place his person in the power of his enemy under a guarantee of security. His former treachery was requited, as it deserved, by the same treatment; and, while he himself was taken to Persia and consigned to the castle of oblivion, his queen, after a brief resistance, was brought to the presence of Shapur and outraged before the eyes of his army until she expired.

A series of massacres on a large scale and organised by Shapur in person was the sequel of these events. The unfortunate Armenians were collected into large bodies and trampled down under the feet of elephants. The number of the victims is said to have amounted to thousands and tens of thousands of either sex and every age. The great cities, including Artaxata and Vagharshapat, were ruthlessly destroyed. Whole populations, among which were conspicuous the numerous Jewish colonies, were driven off into captivity. From this calamity, which must have occurred after the year 363 and before 379, the Arsakid dynasty does not appear to have recovered. The son of Arshak,

[1] The peace of A.D. 363.

by name Pap, was indeed placed upon the throne by the emperor, and reigned for several years. But, like his father, he turned his arms against his protectors the moment they had cleared his frontiers of the inveterate foe. Like his father he coquetted with the Persian power, forgetting the unspeakable insults to which his family had been subjected. He even possessed the effrontery to despatch to the emperor an insulting message, summoning him to *restore* Edessa and Cæsarea and ten other cities which he averred had belonged to his ancestors. Pap was put to death by imperial order, and another member of the Arsakid family sent to reign in his place. But that prince was expelled by the most valiant of the Armenian chieftains, who proceeded to administer the country in the interests of the sons of Pap. When these had come of age the royal authority was divided between them, while the numerous Persian party among the Armenians selected a rival Arsakid and enlisted in his favour Persian support. Armenian politics were becoming a farce when the rulers of the two great powers arrived at a solution to which both had been provoked. The buffer state was divided between them, the Persians taking the greater portion, and the smaller, including the valley of the Western Euphrates, falling to the Roman Empire (A.D. 387). Phantom kings of Arsakid descent were set up by either power, until in the course of time Persian governors and Greek prefects administered the government in either sphere.

I have anticipated in this brief summary upon the sequel of the ecclesiastical policy pursued by King Tiran. After the murder of the bishop of Taron, whose diocese included Astishat, a priest of the church in this religious centre was elevated to the pontifical dignity and duly consecrated at Cæsarea. He was succeeded by a scion of the House of Albianus—a House of which the founder is mentioned first in the list of bishops chosen by St. Gregory from the ranks of the children of the heathen priests.[1] Meanwhile the sons of Yusik—the terrible progeny given to the world by his bride of a single night—had reached an age which permitted the full indulgence of their wicked appetites in every kind of vice. They are said to have met their death in the pontifical palace, where their wassail was cut short by the angel of God. One of the twins, by name Athenogenes, had already produced an heir; and it was this child who, when he had reached the estate of manhood, was acclaimed katholikos by army and nation during

[1] Agathangelus, *Life of St. Gregory*, sec. 154.

the reign of King Arshak. Nerses—such was his name—had been brought up at Cæsarea, the native city of his contemporary, St. Basil the Great. After an early marriage he adopted the military profession and became chamberlain and counsellor to his king. He is delineated as the ideal of a perfect cavalier—tall and supple of figure, with a face of great beauty, which enlisted the sympathy of both sexes and all classes. Yet the youth wore the flower of a blameless private life; and his high capacities were from the first bestowed upon the intimate care of the poor or afflicted, and the protection of the oppressed. His function at court was to stand behind the person of the king, attired in a rich and elegant robe, and bearing in his hand the royal sword of tried steel with its golden scabbard and belt inlaid with precious stones. Such was the station which he was fulfilling when the nobles and assembled troops approached the steps of the throne. They had come to demand his acceptance of the high office, hereditary in his family; but the embarrassed chamberlain waved them aside. His profession of personal unworthiness was received with laughter; his indignant protests by the clash of shields. Upon his persistence King Arshak gave orders that he should be bound in his presence, and shorn of his long and abundant hair. Many of the bystanders shed tears when the ruthless scissors severed those silky and floating locks. Stripped of his gay apparel, he was made to assume the garb of a priest; and it was difficult to recognise in the face of the deacon, who was being ordained by a venerable bishop, the brave soldier and princely courtier of a few minutes ago.[1]

The national character of the Armenian Church is mainly derived from the institutions of St. Gregory; but it was this Nerses, his direct descendant, who brought it into line with the Church of the Empire in the important sphere of internal development and discipline. The family likeness which it still presents to the neighbouring Greek Church is largely due to this prelate. The monastery is still the pivot of the ecclesiastical organisation; and it was this contemporary, perhaps this disciple of St. Basil of Cæsarea, who spread broadcast cloisters and convents over the land. A single rule was established for the several orders of monks; and the laity were bidden to observe certain wholesome regulations, among which was included abstention from animal food. The poor and the sick were lodged in hospices, and were

[1] Faustus, iv. 3.

not allowed to beg; a humane enactment provided that their neighbours should bring them food to their public or private dwellings. In each district was founded a school for the instruction of the people in the Greek and Syriac languages. Every action of the great katholikos bears the imprint of a high purpose and overwelling zeal. That purpose was to conquer the lusts of a full-blooded and intemperate people by subduing their unruly bodies and fanning into life the spark of the soul. But just in the execution of this lofty project he was brought into conflict with the king, and the fate of his grandfather stared him in the face. The son of Tiran was indeed the son of that obstinate sinner, nor was Nerses less inflexible than Yusik. Perhaps the monarch acted with design, and wished to divide his people into separate communities of the black and the white sheep. The saints might be handed over to the sway of their prince-prelate; over the sinners his own prerogative would remain supreme. He proclaimed an edict which enacted that every debtor or accused person, those who had shed the blood or taken the property of their neighbours, should assemble in an appointed place, where no law would be allowed to touch them and each man might lead his life after his own guise.[1] To that haven beyond their dreams flocked the company of the unrighteous—women with the husbands of other women, and men with the wives of other men. The brigands and the assassins and the unjust judges and the perjured witnesses, all collected at the given tryst. The place was at first a village; but it soon prospered, and became a town, which again extended until it filled an entire valley. Then the king built a palace in the midst of his congenial subjects and called the city by his own name (Arshakavan). Upon the return of the katholikos—he is said to have been exiled by a Roman emperor; but his vicar during his absence had not betrayed his trust—this truly original and royal solution of the problem of joint government was vigorously arraigned. The pontiff taxed the monarch with having founded a second Sodom; but, relenting to a mood of greater amiability, he suggested that the sovereign might continue to reside in his city if he would entrust its management into the hands of the katholikos. The rejection of this kind proposal was shortly followed by the out-

[1] Mr. F. C. Conybeare has kindly communicated to me the following interesting note to this passage:—"These communities were really cities of refuge, imitated from the old Jewish legislation; and the Armenian monarch's aim was a wise one, namely, to set limits to the blood-feuds and vendettas of his subjects."

break of a malady, which decimated the inhabitants. The king was constrained to sue for pardon from the saint and to disband his colony. The quarrel broke out anew when the inveterate profligate shed the blood of a subject and espoused his beautiful wife. Nerses left the court and did not return. Arshak, in open defiance, appointed a katholikos in his stead—a certain Chunak, who was nothing better than one of his minions. He could not hope that his action might be endorsed at Cæsarea; so he summoned all the bishops of his own country and bade them consecrate the object of his choice. Only two could be persuaded to perform the ceremony; and these were perhaps pensioners of the king.[1]

The full activity of the lawful pontiff was not resumed until after the calamity which resulted in the bondage of his old enemy and the seclusion of Arshak in the castle of oblivion. The accession of Pap was attended by the presentation of a solemn petition, in which sovereign and nation craved the assistance of their true pastor. Nerses devoted his energies to the restoration of the churches which had been destroyed by Shapur. But the son of Arshak was quite as licentious, although less capable than his father; and he is said to have added to the sum of the delinquencies of his predecessor the habitual practice of unspeakable vice. The monster was forbidden entry even into the porch of the church; and he retaliated by poisoning the katholikos with a cup of peace which, in token of repentance, he tendered with his own hand. The death of Nerses, which occurred not later than the year 374,[2] marks an epoch in the history of the Church.

On the one hand its emoluments were considerably curtailed; on the other—and this is a fact with the most far-reaching consequences—it was dissevered for good and all from the Church of the Empire. It is quite evident that Nerses failed to gauge correctly the temper of his countrymen; and it was the defect of his undoubted virtues that he at once endeavoured to go too far and to accomplish too much. The reaction from his severe ordinances enabled the king to proceed unhindered in the work of overthrowing the structure which his victim had reared. The

[1] I adopt the ingenious suggestion of Professor Gelzer (*Die Anfänge*, etc., p. 155) that the dioceses of Korduk and Aghdznik were included in the provinces ceded to Persia under Jovian's treaty in 363. Their bishops would have taken refuge in the dominions of the king and be receiving his support. The sequence of events in Faustus is against this hypothesis; but that is not of much account.

[2] We know from Ammianus Marcellinus (xxx. 1) that King Pap himself died in 374.

hospices were abolished, the convents were destroyed and their inmates given over to prostitution. Moreover the greater portion of the lands bestowed upon the Church by Tiridates were appropriated by the State. Of each seven domains belonging to the former institution the revenues of five were allotted to the Treasury. Nor can we doubt that popular support was forthcoming for the revolution which the monarch initiated in the relations with the Greek Church. The Armenians have at all periods approved a national policy, and preferred to perish than unite with their neighbours. A bishop of the House of Albianus, always obsequious to the throne, was invested with the vacant primacy. The consent of Cæsarea was not even applied for, nor was the bishop despatched to the capital of the province of Cappadocia for consecration in accordance with the usual custom. With the possible exception of the two sons of St. Gregory and, of course, of the pseudo-katholikos, Chunak, each successive holder of the pontifical office, including the Illuminator, had been in the habit of proceeding with great pomp through the territory of the Empire to the steps of the episcopal throne in the Greek city. It was there that the chosen of the Armenians bowed his head before a prelate who loomed in the eyes of his countrymen as the living embodiment of the authority of the Church of Christ. The defiance offered him by the king was accepted by Basil in a similar spirit. He called together all the members of the provincial synod of Cæsarea, without inviting the nominee of King Pap. A violent despatch was addressed to the Armenian bishops and a similar one to the king. The right of consecrating bishops was taken away from the katholikos, and he was left the single prerogative of blessing bread at the court of the king. The result of this hot temper upon either side was a bitter conflict in the Armenian Church itself. The clergy were divided into followers of the king and the House of Albianus, and those who held to the necessity of consecration in Cæsarea and to allegiance to the House of Gregory.[1] The subsequent lapse of the greater part of Armenia under Persian influence promoted the policy initiated by Pap; and when, towards the close of the century, the chair was again occupied by a descendant of St. Gregory, the link with Cæsarea was not restored.

[1] Professor Gelzer, whose admirable essay I have freely used in the composition of this paragraph, adduces evidence from the correspondence of Basil to show that the advisers of King Pap proceeded cautiously along the path which they had chosen.

There can, I think, be no doubt that the story of the foundation of the Armenian Church by a direct mandate of Christ Himself was invented not earlier than the period at which we have now arrived. The mandate is said to have taken the form of an injunction to St. Gregory to build the church of Vagharshapat. Neither the author of the Life of the Illuminator, as we can trace that source through the Agathangelus treatise, nor the historian who continues his narrative, displays any cognisance with such a momentous event. The former tells us that it was at Astishat in the south of Armenia, the country of the Murad, that Gregory built the first Christian church. The cult of martyrs which he first introduced was not the cult of the Ripsimians but that of St. John the Baptist and Athenogenes. We learn from the latter that after the death of the saint, and at least down to the murder of Nerses, the mother-church of Armenia was situated at Astishat and not at Edgmiatsin. Faustus, indeed, expresses himself not once alone or in a doubtful manner upon this important point. Astishat contains the "first and great mother of Armenian churches," "the first and greatest of all the churches of Armenia, the principal and most honoured seat of the Christian religion." It was at Astishat that was situated the palace of the katholikos. The great synod which was convoked by Nerses of all Armenian bishops was held at Astishat. When that prelate wished to chide the chief of the king's eunuchs for casting covetous glances upon the wide domains which surrounded the church, he quoted the scriptural injunction against such ignoble conduct, and added that such was the will of Jesus Christ, "*Whose choice had first fallen upon the church at Astishat for the glorification of His Name.*"[1] On the other hand, I cannot help detecting in these passages indications that their author was aware of the growing rivalry of the church at Edgmiatsin. Faustus wrote after the severance from Cæsarea and after the partition of Armenia (A.D. 387). He displays acquaintance with the Ripsimian legend. But there is no trace in his pages of a knowledge of the vision of St. Gregory upon which Edgmiatsin has founded her claim.

As time went on, several causes, which perhaps we may distinguish, contributed to widen further the breach with the Church of the Empire. The Persian occupation and the ultimate removal of the Arsakid dynasty, whose hereditary blood feud with the House of Sasan had long embittered the antagonism of

[1] Such is the translation given by Professor Gelzer of the passage in Faustus iv. 14.

the peoples, were no small factors in an estrangement from Greek influences which the policy of Persia lost no occasion of promoting. The invention by Mesrop of an Armenian alphabet,[1] and the institution of a school of translators during the pontificate of the son of Nerses, Isaac the Great (*c.* 390-439), constitute elements which, while they worked for the attachment of the Armenians to Greek culture and for the wider propagation of Christianity, were yet calculated to foster the strong proclivities of this people towards complete religious independence. Lastly—if indeed there be an end to such a catalogue, in which each item is as much an effect as a cause—the peculiar genius of the Armenian nation imprinted a stamp upon the dogma of their Church which was not the stamp sanctioned by that of the Empire.

The Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) addressed itself to the solution of the problems which were the natural outcome of the dogma adopted at the Council of Nice. What was the true view of the mystery expressed by the words of the formula: *Son of God, of one nature with the Father, Who came down from heaven and took flesh and became man?* How explain the character of the union of God with man in the person of Christ? Over the answer which should be returned to this question conflicts arose which destroyed thousands of innocent people, and which prepared the way for the disappearance of the Roman Empire from the map of Asia, and for the triumph of Islam. The compromise adopted at Chalcedon is difficult to place in a short sentence; but perhaps no essential feature is omitted in the following phrase: *Christ according to His Godhead is of one nature with the Father, according to His humanity is, apart from sin, of one nature with us. This one and the same Christ is recognised in two natures indissolubly united but yet distinct.* The Armenians were not represented at this Council;[2] and, indeed, it is contemporary with the fierce religious persecutions directed against them by Yezdegerd II. But, when once the unfortunate nation, or

[1] I am indebted to Mr. F. C. Conybeare for the following note to this passage:—The Armenian alphabet was imposed on Sahak (Isaac the Great) by the Persian Government as a political device to estrange the Armenians both from Greeks and from Syrians. The only historical account is that of Anania of Shirak (unedited chronicle in an uncial MS. at Mush), who relates that the twenty-nine consonants were "arranged in order" by Daniel, a Syrian philosopher, and sent (during the reign of Theodosius the Less) to the *Armenian* Satrap Vakortsh by Viram Shapu the king by hand of the Elder Abel. The seven vowels were still wanted, and Mesrop received these from Hayek, a noble of Taron. Stephanus, a scribe of Samosata, incorporated these seven vowels among the consonants.

[2] Nor at the Councils of Constantinople and of Ephesus.

what remained after the orgy of the fire-worshippers, had settled down to a more peaceful routine, they proceeded to hold a synod of their own, which assembled at Vagharshapat (A.D. 491), and which with all solemnity cursed the Council of Chalcedon. This procedure was repeated at several subsequent synods; nor has the bitterness which was consequent upon this open breach with the Church of the West subsided at the present day. At Edgmiatsin, the seat of this synod, held fourteen centuries ago, I was informed that the Armenian Church expressly rejects Chalcedon; and the emphasis of language was underlined by the tone of the voice. The Armenians therefore differ both with the Greek and with the Roman Church in their expression of the mystery of Christology. They will not hear of two natures. They hold that in Christ there is one person and one nature, one will and one energy; and their liturgy presents this dogma in an impressive manner in the Trisagion, which runs: "O God, holy God, mighty God, everlasting God, *who wast crucified for us.*"[1] At the same time they deny and denounce the teaching of Eutyches, protagonist against the Nestorians. Eutyches held that the body of Christ is not to be regarded as of one nature with ours; the Armenians maintain that God became man in the fullest sense.[2]

One might argue this question to all eternity; but one feels that the Greeks were the subtler disputants. The Armenians, like the Persian Mohammedans, would appear to be averse to abstractions; they go, perhaps, to extremes in the concreteness of their conception of God—a God-man in the crudest sense. This Christology has probably embodied the sentiments of the people; but it had the effect of estranging them not only with the Church of the Empire, but also with the great body of their fellow-Christians of different nationality within the Persian dominions. At the synod of Beth Lapat (A.D. 483 or 484) the old Christian Church of Persia welcomed into its bosom the flying forces of Nestorianism, and adopted the Nestorian confession. The Georgians, it is true, followed the lead of the Armenians, with whom their Church was directly connected. But these allies broke away before the close of the sixth century, and went over to the teaching of Chalcedon. As the centuries rolled

[1] It appears that this formula was added to the Trisagion by the Synod of Vagharshapat (Ter-Mikelean, *Die armenische Kirche*, etc., p. 47).

[2] The subject is fully discussed by Ter-Mikelean (*op. cit.* pp. 52 *seq.*, and cp. pp. 70 and 89).

by, these various breaches became wider, and they are still marked features in the Christianity of the East. Martyrdom and political slavery were alternatives which were gladly accepted rather than compromise dogmatic and doctrinal differences. When Heraclius visited Armenia after replacing the Cross in the churches of Jerusalem, the Armenians refused to camp with his troops. In the Middle Ages, when the Sasanians were already forgotten, when the caliphs, their successors, were approaching their doom, the stubborn hierarchy insisted upon baptizing babes a second time if the ceremony had been performed by a Greek priest. All attempts to effect a union—and they have been many and serious—have invariably failed. The more attractive the offers of the Greeks, the greater grew the hatred of them; nor have the popes met with better success. They have added costly objects to the treasury at Edgmiatsin; the result remains a blank. When we reflect that this obstinate people are as intelligent as any in the world in the various pursuits of civilised life, our anger at such conduct, which gave away the cause of civilisation, may be tempered by a different feeling. The Armenians have fought at all hazards to preserve their individuality, and the bulk of the nation have perished in the attempt. The remnant may be destined, like the son of Anak, to redress the wrongs inflicted by their ancestors upon the common Christian weal. On the other hand, the lesson which is taught by history is that no nation and no Christianity will succeed with the Armenians which endeavours to deflect them from their own opinions and to preclude them from working out their own salvation in their own way.[1]

[1] My reader may consider that I have been dealing too largely in ancient history. My excuse is that the position remains much the same at the present day. The differences between the Armenian and the Greek Churches are well summarised in a note by the Mekhitarists to the famous address delivered by Nerses of Lambron in the twelfth century to the council assembled at Romkla (*Orazione sinodale di S. Nierses Lampronense*, Venice, 1812, p. 188). The Greek Church demanded that the Armenian Church should:—1. Anathematise all those who assert that Christ has one nature. 2. Confess Jesus Christ in two natures. 3. Not address the Trisagion to the Second Person of the Trinity. 4. Celebrate the Dominical feasts in conformity with the Greek Church. 5. Prepare the Chrism or Holy Oil with oil alone. 6. Celebrate the Holy Communion with leavened bread and with water in the wine. 8. Receive the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh Œcumenical Councils. 9. Receive the nomination of the Armenian patriarch from the Greek Emperor. The attitude of the two Churches towards one another is regretfully but most pithily summed up by the same Nerses of Lambron. The Greeks thanked God that they were not like the Armenians; and the Armenians thanked God that they were not like the Greeks.

It has been generally supposed that the Armenians subscribed the Councils of

Constantinople and Ephesus; but I must repeat that this does not appear to have actually been the case (see Ter-Mikelean, *op. cit.*).

Apart from dogma and ritual, the traveller notices a conspicuous difference between the Greek and the Armenian Church at the present day. You will not find eikons in Armenian houses, while no Russian house is without them. As regards the Church of Rome, the dogmatic breach is even wider than with the Greek Church; in common with the latter the Armenian Church rejects the *Filioque*. And of course it denies the infallibility of the Pope.

CHAPTER XVII

TO ANI AND TO KARS

October 14.—We left the cloister at half-past eight, our little party of five persons including the Armenian cook. We had hired in the district ten miserable ponies, of which five carried our effects. The most direct way to Ani crosses the basal slopes of Alagöz, from the southern to the most westerly extremities of the shield-shaped mass. You proceed from Edgmiatsin in a north-westerly direction, the ground rising at every step of your advance. On the point of course, beyond oases of verdure in the foreground, lie the stony and arid declivities of the mountain—contours of immense length and low vaulting, joining the plain to the horizontal outline in the sky. The belt of verdure consists of fields of the cotton and the castor-oil plants, of patches of orchard and vineyard, and sparse groves of poplar, rising from the dusty and boulder-strewn waste. It is sustained by runnels which exhaust the waters of the Kasagh or Abaran Su, the stream which collects the scanty drainage of the volcano upon its eastern flank. The boulders are worn by water and have been dispersed by the swollen river, during the season of spring floods. Where we crossed the Kasagh itself, or principal channel, it was a languid and soil-charged body of water, threading these stony tracts. We passed several villages within the irrigated area, some inhabited by Armenians, others by Tartars, and a few by both races alike. Hiznavuz, or Kiznaus, an Armenian settlement, containing the State-school of the district, was the last of these hamlets of the fertile zone. We stayed a few minutes before the open windows of the schoolhouse, listening to a lesson given in Russian to Armenian boys. Behind the village, a sterile eminence leads over into the barren highlands which compose the pedestal of Alagöz.

The moderate elevation of these highlands above the plain of the Araxes and their long extension from east to west are conditions favourable to the full appreciation of the landscape, and of each new feature in the slowly-changing scene. Their free position contributes to invest them with the character of a natural gallery, which commands unbroken prospects over some of the grandest works of Nature in her most inspired moods. The European, whose conception of mountain scenery is founded upon the arbitrary peaks and scattered valleys characteristic of his Alps, who has looked with emotion upon the doubtful features of his lowlands from the summit of some famous pass, can scarcely fail to be deeply impressed by the attributes of a panorama in which reliefs and depressions of stupendous scale are disposed as members of a great design, and are seen in the pure atmosphere of an Eastern climate with all the clearness of a model in clay. At his feet lies a plain which is level as water, which in no very remote geological period was covered by an inland sea. It is a distance of some thirty miles to its opposite confines; yet the towns and the plantations are pencilled upon its surface as though they had been traced by a draughtsman's pen. The plain is bordered by the volcanic range which we have come to know as the Ararat system—a chain of which the jagged and fantastic outline is already familiar from many a rich sunset effect. The summits rise to nearly 8000 feet above the campagna; but how humble they appear behind the train of the fabric of Ararat, gathering immediately from the floor of the plain! The bold snow bastions of the north-western slope are seen in face from these highlands; and it is difficult to realise that the pronounced lineaments which compose that airy figure are removed by a space of nearly forty miles. We had not yet lost sight of the line of poplars which screens the cloister when the distinctive features of this magnificent landscape were unfolded to our view. The several ranges and mountain masses were disposed in the form of an amphitheatre, of which we seemed to occupy one of the middle tiers. In the east, along the Araxes, the crinkled buttresses of the northern border were still visible, projecting in a southerly direction beyond the cock-combed hill of Karniarch. In the west, at an interval of sixty miles from those eminences, the level ground extended to a double-peaked mountain which juts out into the valley from the Ararat system, and is known under the name of Takjaltu. Face to face with one another stood Alagöz

and Ararat. In the plain we could discern an isolated hummock, north of the Araxes and bearing about south-west. It marks the site of Armavir.

That this scene—in itself a world, and a world which fills the mind with wonder—has of necessity been the theatre of momentous events in the life of humanity, the traveller realises at a single glance. His pious predecessors were surely justified in accepting the ancient belief of the Armenians, that our first father and mother loved and suffered in this plain.[1] If we are to seek the site of Paradise within the limits of Armenia, neither the Euphrates nor the Tigris crosses a country equally appropriate to have been the earliest and fairest home of man. It looks the land of hope which Noah tilled and planted with vineyards, the second nursery of the human race. The Armenians, whose mythical history connects them closely with Babylonia and Assyria, who from the earliest times have been accustomed to receive Jewish immigrants and to see Jewish colonies established in their midst, must at a remote date have localised the events of the Biblical narrative in this the most favoured of all their valleys and at the foot of the loftiest of their mountains.[2] If the Jewish writings which they inherited were believed to have reference to their native surroundings, it was only natural that they should identify with the same districts the primeval setting of the later creations of the Jewish mind; the whole countryside became hallowed by religious tradition; nor need we feel surprise when we read that a tree in the neighbourhood of Karakala on the Araxes was believed to have sheltered Job and his three friends.[3] When the horizon narrows and embraces the particular history of the Armenians, we find that some of the first beginnings of their history are placed within this fertile and spacious plain; it was the chosen seat of Armenak, the son or grandson of their progenitor, Hayk, to which he descended from the mountains about the head waters of the Euphrates, accompanied by his whole race. Here were situated their most ancient cities, of

[1] See especially Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, Paris, 1717, vol. ii. p. 335; Parrot, *Reise zum Ararat*, p. 83, and *passim*.

The ingenious botanist, Tournefort, was tickled by the question—suggested by the tobacco fields through which he passed—whether the fragrant weed was included among the plants of the terrestrial paradise. Owing to the absence of olive trees in this region, he is puzzled by the story of the dove and the olive branch.

[2] For the intercourse of the Armenians with the Jews I would refer my reader to Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. x. pp. 586 *seq*.

[3] Dubois, *Voyage autour du Caucase*, vol. iii. p. 448.

some of which the relics still stand above ground and invite discussion of which city they denote the site. Armavir, the contemporary of Nineveh, with the grove of plane trees which worked the magic of the oaks of Dodona, has been identified with the ruins that are found on the little hillock which we distinguish from the detail of the landscape at our feet.[1] Further west, on the southern bank of the river, where it is enclosed by rocky cliffs of basaltic lava, due to the passage of a lava stream, modern travellers have discovered considerable remains of ancient masonry, which have been utilised to build the castle of Karakala, and which are still, I believe, in want of their older name.[2] Traces of the fortress of Ervandakert, and of Ervandashat, its companion city, which were built in the first century of our era by an Armenian monarch of Arsakid descent, have been remarked on either bank of the Arpa river, the ancient Akhurean, where it issues from the elevated country on the north of the Araxes and effects its confluence at the head of this plain.[3] In the days when those cities flourished, the haughty Araxes was spanned by bridges of which, here and there, a pier or a buttress still survives.[4] Below the lofty rock of Takjaltu lie the famous salt mines of Kulpi, which have been exploited from immemorial times.

After leaving the Armenian village we continued in the same direction over the barren highlands, in possession of the landscape which I have endeavoured to describe. We were riding at walking pace; our immediate surroundings were indifferent to us; nor for the space of three hours did we meet a single settlement, except here and there a group of Kurdish tents. When at midday the clouds cleared above the summit of Alagöz, we remarked that the fangs of its rocky core were invisible behind the bulging contours of the outer sheath. Above us, upon those slopes, we could discern some small green patches, which mark the site of hamlets, peopled by Tartars and Armenians who eke out a scanty

[1] *Ibid.* p. 419; and compare the account of this city given by Moses of Khorene.

[2] See Ouseley's *Travels*, vol. iii. p. 450; Ker Porter's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 640; Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 446. Ouseley and Ker Porter thought that they were the remains of Armavir. Dubois probably goes astray in assigning them to Tigranocerta.

[3] Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. iii. p. 435 *seq.* On a hill at the confluence of the Arpa Chai with the Araxes, and on the western side of the former river, this traveller found relics of the ancient fortress of Ervandakert. It communicated with the Araxes by a subterranean passage. Ervandashat was situated on the eastern bank, a little higher up the stream.

[4] At Ervandakert and at Karakala, according to the testimony of Dubois. See also Ker Porter (*loc. cit.*) for the relics of the bridge at the latter place.

subsistence on the mountain side. When we had reached a point some thirteen miles in direct distance from Edgmiatsin, we crossed a close succession of deep ravines. The first of these was the most considerable of the three, and contained the broad bed of a dry watercourse, which descends from the central mountain mass. On the further side of the last among them we came upon the remains of a large church, of great simplicity but of much beauty of form. It was built of hewn stone, in the style of the best Armenian architecture; and the ancient frescos still stained the walls of the apse. But the lofty dome had fallen in, leaving nothing but a yawning circle, with fragments of cloud crossing the blue above our heads. An inscription in the interior bears the date 876 (Armenian era), which corresponds to the year A.D. 1426. Just beyond this ruin is situated the little Armenian village of Talysh, on the southern confines of which we visited the remains of some towers which are probably of the same period as the church, and which overlook the ravine upon the west. Both the *starshina* and the priest of Talysh were absent from the settlement; the inhabitants professed complete ignorance of the history of their antiquities, which, since they could neither read nor write, was perhaps not feigned. The afternoon was well advanced when we left this pleasant site; a mist arose, and developed into rain. In less than two hours we were glad to find shelter in the Tartar village of Akhja Kala, a refreshing oasis of green willows on these sterile slopes.

The essential majesty of the Armenian landscapes derives enhanced value from the presence at all seasons of clouds. In this respect Armenia is more favoured than Persia, where month after month you long for a cloud to temper the glare. To the radiance of her pellucid atmosphere is added the charm of effects of vapour; but the vapour has already been tamed in the passage of the border ranges, and floats in quiet masses over the central regions of the tableland. We awoke on the following morning to a scene which is characteristic of the season and of this plain. The whole valley of the Araxes was covered by a sheet of white mist, and had the appearance of a vast sea. From invisible limits in the west to the foot of the Ararat fabric the deceptive substance followed the base of the mountains, as though we had suddenly been introduced to that geological period when the waters washed these rocky shores. In the east several islands rose above the shining surface, eminences of the plain. The high ground upon

which we stood was bathed in pure sunlight, and all Nature was intensely still.

As the morning advanced the vapours lifted or were dissolved; films of white cloud were wafted across the blue. We continued our march over highlands of the same stony character as those which we had traversed during the preceding day. But beyond the village the land had been cleared in places, and wheat planted, which was showing green above the ground. It is protected by the snows which cover these slopes during winter, and it is reaped in spring or early summer. The rocky heart of Alagöz was still concealed behind the declivities which swept towards us, on our right hand. In the great plain, which still lay beneath us, we missed the stretches of pleasant verdure which in that direction had become familiar to our eyes; desert tracts, seared by gullies, had taken the place of the gardens; while further west the valley was broken into hummock waves. A ground of ochre, washed in places with rose madder—such were the colours which clothed this naked expanse; the delicate tints were continued up the sides of the mountains which border the plain upon the south. These lower slopes of the Ararat system receive the light at sunrise; and, being composed of a marly substance, which is modelled into soft convexities, display a variety of tender hues. Bold peaks, of which the summits had been strewn with snow during the night, rise along the spine of the range; but they are dwarfed, even at this distance, by the fabric of Ararat. We could discern on the west of the mountain the pass which leads to Bayazid, and we had not yet lost sight of the mound of Armavir. But it was evident that the even ground in the valley of the Araxes was coming to an end. The western limits of the level plain may be placed in the neighbourhood of Karakala; and, according to Dubois, the last canal which derives from the Araxes waters the fields on the west of the village of Shagriar.[1]

Villages became less rare as we rounded the mass of the mountain and opened a view over the country in the direction of the Arpa Chai. An hour from Akhja Kala our attention was attracted by a still distant eminence, rising above the shelving land upon that side. It was the crag of Bugutu, which is probably due to a later eruption on the flank of Alagöz. We passed two Tartar settlements, and crossed a couple of ravines, the first

[1] Dubois, *op. cit.* vol. iii. pp. 421 and 449. Compare also Von Behagel's account (*apud* Parrot, *op. cit.*).

of which must have had a depth of nearly a hundred feet. It contained a pleasant growth of lofty poplars and other trees, and it was threaded by a babbling brook. When the prospect extended to the upper slopes of the mountain, we observed that they were sprinkled with fresh snow. A stage of two and a half hours brought us to the village of Talin, a prosperous and picturesque little township at the foot of Bugutu (Fig. 61).

Both the Pristav and the priest were quickly forthcoming; we were by them conducted to a house which contained two storeys, and which was the residence of the priest. While food was being prepared, we were accompanied by our hosts in a walk round the place. We were informed that it contained some thousand inhabitants, all

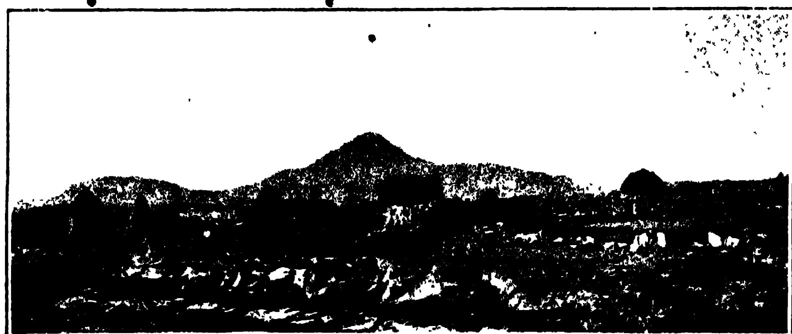


FIG 61. VILLAGE OF TALIN, WITH MOUNT BUGUTU.

of whom were Armenians. It possesses a church, but is still without a school. The old prejudices survive, and it was impossible to persuade the young women to submit to the camera. But Talin is distinguished by the close proximity of a piece of architecture which appears to date from the golden period of the Bagratid dynasty and which ranks among the most charming examples of the Armenian style. It is a church—they call it cloister (*vank*), and it perhaps belonged to a monastery—which, although in ruins, is fairly well preserved. The roof has fallen in; the walls display wide breaches; but the masonry is still sharp and fresh, as when first put together, and the traceries might just have undergone the finishing touch. With its bold windows—no mere apertures—and bands of elegant sculpture, I thought it the most beautiful building I had yet seen in Armenia. I reproduce some of these chiselled mouldings of the exterior. The first, a vine pattern (Fig. 62), belongs to the southern transept; and the second

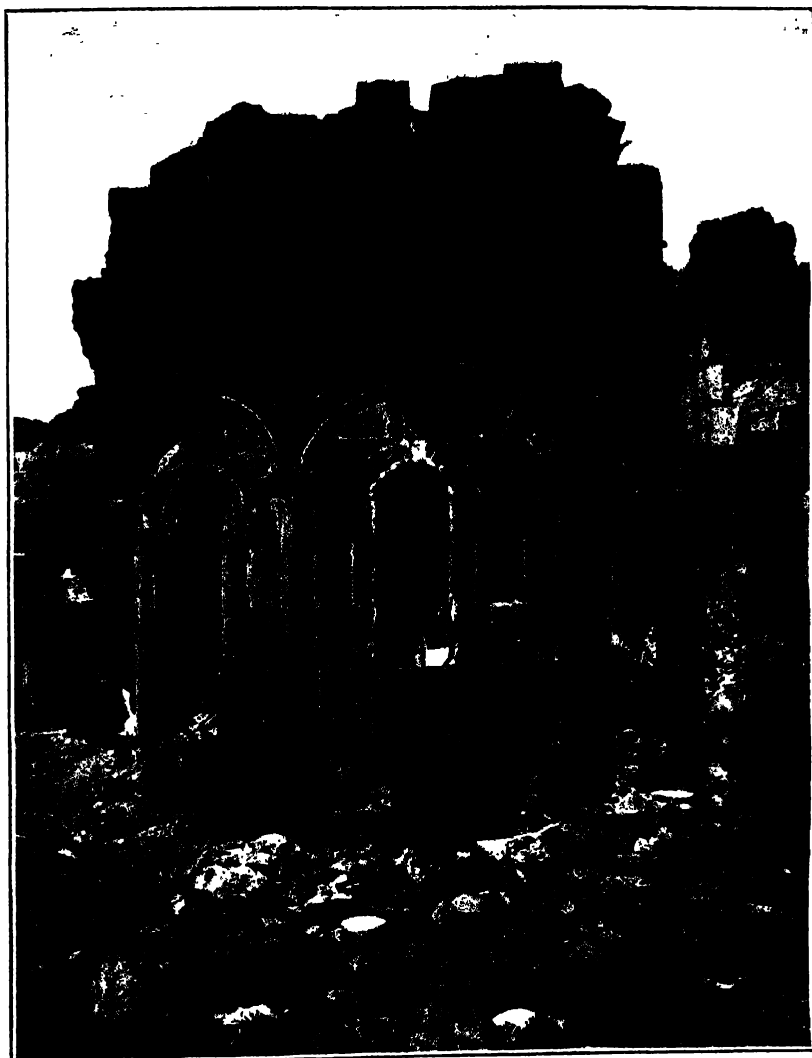


FIG. 62. TALIN: MOULDINGS ON SOUTH SIDE OF RUINOUS CHURCH.

(Fig. 63), representing a pear or apple, is taken from that upon the north. On the south side of the ruin we observed a sun-dial, carved in stone; and we were shown a square block, which had been found among the débris, and upon which was sculptured a relief, representing the Virgin and Child, attended by two angels. A graveyard surrounds the building; some of the old crosses have been built into the walls of the village church. A little on the east we noticed the remains of a small chapel. The ground was strewn with fallen stones, some red, others grey—the two colours which are so skilfully blended or placed in contrast by Armenian architects upon the broad, undecorated spaces of their walls. We enquired the history of the ruin, and were referred to a partially defaced inscription on one of the piers which once supported the dome. It mentions the name of King Sembat, a member of the Bagratid dynasty, which reigned from the ninth to the eleventh century.[1] The grandfather of the priest informed us that both the monastery and the church had been maintained up to a comparatively recent period. He said that the priests had fled during the campaign of Paskevich, since which date the buildings had been allowed to fall into decay.



FIG. 63. MOULDINGS ON NORTH SIDE OF RUINOUS CHURCH AT TALIN.

Ker Porter, who crossed the district on his way from Ani to Edgmiatsin, mentions the existence in this neighbourhood of

[1] Probably Sembat II. (A.D. 977-89), the monarch who laid the foundations of the cathedral at Ani.

extensive ruins—the deserted relics of two churches, of walls and houses, which he saw at a distance, but did not stay to examine. He calls the place Talys, and Ritter hazards the conjecture that these may have been the remains of Bagaran.[1] That city, which was founded by the same monarch who gave his name to Ervandakert and Ervandashat, became a royal residence of the Bagratid dynasty, and at the end of the fourteenth century of our era still continued to exist. We did not hear of further antiquities in the vicinity of Talin; but the correspondence of name suggests that Ker Porter's account may have been called forth by the former condition of the site which we visited. It was evident that these highlands had been the seat of a flourishing civilisation, later in date than that which produced the vanished cities of the plain. First at Talysh and next at Talin we discovered traces of this mediæval culture, of which the evidence was lavished upon us when we had reached the banks of the Arpa, at Ani and at Khosha Vank.

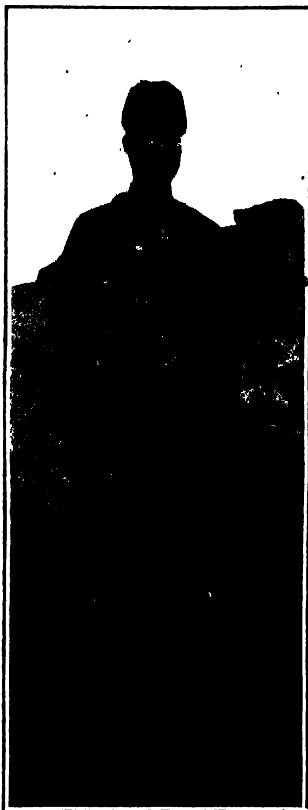


Fig. 64. Tartar Khan at Talin

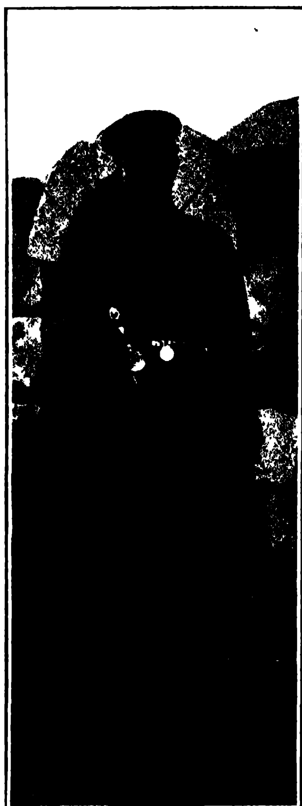


Fig. 65. Pristav of Talin.

The upper chamber of the priest's house and the company therein assembled recalled the simplicity

[1] Ker Porter, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 178; Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. x. p. 449.

of the early Christian times. Our host was still a young man, and his natural capacities had not been blunted by indigence and ill-treatment. His villagers were well off, and appeared to live on terms of friendship with their neighbours of Tartar race. A Tartar khan, a grandee of the district, happened to be visiting the place on business (Fig. 64); and we were glad to see that his intercourse with the principal people was marked by tokens of mutual respect. His grave face and dignified figure contrasted with the vivacity of the Armenians; his presence added to the interest of the group which I photographed, and which included the Pristav (Fig. 65) and the priest (Fig. 66). Neither the official head of the village nor our clerical acquaintance possessed any education, except what had been provided by an Armenian primary school. But both, and especially the former, were men of great intelligence, and did honour to the peasant class from which they had sprung.



FIG 66. PRIEST OF TALIN.

We were in want of another pony, which we were able to hire at Talin; his owner, a Tartar belonging to Akhja Kala, accompanied or followed us on foot (Fig. 67). Measured on the map, it is a distance of sixteen miles from the village to the point at which we struck the Arpa Chai. We owed it to the nature of the ground and to the sorry condition of our horses that we were four and a half hours in performing the stage. It seemed an interminable ride; the landscape was monotonous; and we soon lost any glimpse of the valley of the Araxes, as we continued our north-westerly course. We crossed the neck of the ridge which culminates at its western extremity in the crag of Bugutu; and, on its further side, descended into the little Tartar settlement of Birmalek, where a stream trickles down from Alagöz. A dam

had been constructed which, aided by the nature of the ground, had forced the waters to collect into a small lake. Beyond Birmalek a second ridge was placed athwart our way, and constrained us to deviate towards the west. In the hollow we passed a small settlement of Kurds, called Sapunji, of which the inhabitants were the wildest people we had yet met. It speaks well for the Russian officials that they did not dare to lay hands upon us, travelling, as we were, alone and unarmed. This second ridge was succeeded by another, similar in character, which was followed by several more. They are the outworks or spurs of the central mass of the mountain, from which they radiate outwards in a westerly direction towards the trough of the Arpa Chai. Although their relative elevation above the valleys is not considerable, our guide preferred to turn them than to take them in face. Their sides were clothed with burnt grass, or were sterile and strewn with stones, like the depressions which they confined. For more than two hours we continued among such dreary surroundings, crossing the western basal slopes of Alagöz. These decline, by an almost imperceptible transition, into a tract of open and undulating ground. We were refreshed by the sight of a village, which stood alone and without neighbours on the bare surface of the more even land.

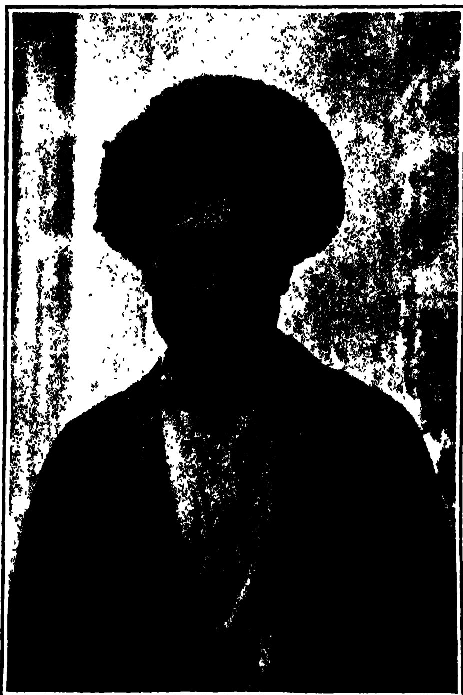


FIG. 67. TARTAR OF AKHJA KALA.

It belonged to a colony of Armenians from the plain of Alexandropol. Let us hope that they will be followed by further migrations of their countrymen into the valley of the Arpa Chai. That classical river of their ancestors crosses a region which was

long famous for its salubrious climate and productive soil. It has not yet recovered from the state of abject desolation to which it was reduced when it formed the borderland between the Turkish and Persian empires. During a ride of nearly two hours from this settlement to the bank of the river, we were not aware of any sign of the presence of man.

Yet the features of this more level zone reminded us of the plain of Alexandropol, of which in some sense it forms an outlying part. We stood in face of the western declivities of Alagöz, with the rocky core of the volcano again disclosed. The contours of the mountain were composed of a number of ridges, which in perspective appeared to belong to two principal groups. One

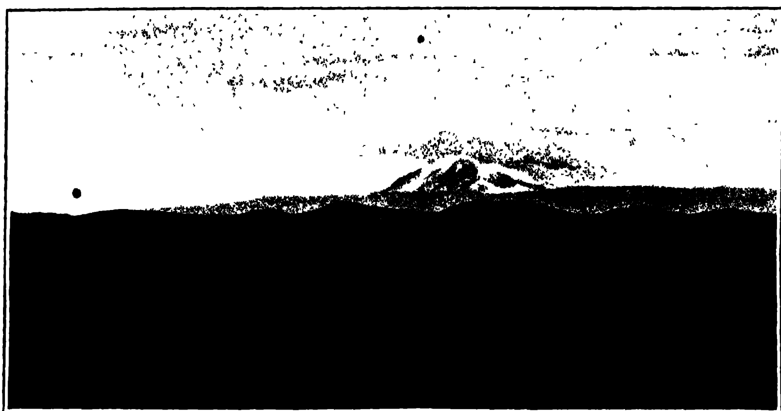


FIG. 68. ALAGÖZ FROM THE PLAINS ON THE WEST.

group declined away into invisible limits on our left hand; the other into an uncertain distance on our right. We were placed in the fork between these two diverging branches. It was evident that the last group separated us from the valley of the Araxes; nor could we doubt that the principal and humble ridge in the reverse direction was the only barrier between us and the plains on the north (Fig. 68).

In the west, to the far horizon stretched the loamy tracts about us, bare of surface, like the sea. Above the outline of this high land rose the peaks of the Ararat system, fretting the sky from south-west to a bold mountain in the south, which we recognised as the familiar Takjaltu. We knew that we were overlooking the trough of the Arpa; but the river was hidden from sight. The light was failing as we entered

the Armenian village of Khosha Vank, on the left bank of the stream.

It is a picturesque little settlement of some 120 tenements, grouped around a stately church. I have referred to it under the name which I received from the priest and the Pristav, but which more properly belongs to the neighbouring monastery. It is called Kizilkilisa (red church) on the Russian maps. It was our intention to sleep in Ani, after fording the river at this village; and we were surprised to learn that the ruins were four hours distant, and that it would be almost impossible to reach them that night. Since the baggage was behind us, we listened to the counsel of our informants, who conducted us to a stone house, containing a single room—the only decent building in the whole place. Although without a school, the inhabitants are no dullards; they seemed extremely ready to make a little money, and pleased to be able to exchange ideas. In fact we discovered on the following day that they had deceived us about Ani, with the express purpose of retaining us for the night. We waited some time in vain for the luggage to overtake us, and then composed ourselves to sleep.

When morning came our effects had not yet arrived; we reflected that we had given the rendezvous at Ani, and, although we felt sure that the laggards would cross the river at our village, decided to push on. The Arpa flows between high banks, a deeply eroded and sinuous bed, hidden by precipitous cliffs of black rock. You form the conception of a trough or fissure in the surface of the tableland, which undulates away into the distance on every side. After fording the stream, we proceeded along the right bank, and, at no great distance, opened out a romantic valley on our left hand, similar in character to that which adjoins the site of the Armenian village. In both places the river describes a complete S, and is lost in the gloom of overhanging walls. The disposition of these rocky sides assumes the appearance of a glen, in which are situated the remains of an extensive monastery, bearing the name of Khosha Vank. Just beyond this standpoint we gained the high land above the river; and there before us, on the plain, lay the ruins which we had been seeking, at the distance of an hour's canter from the cloister, or of a couple of hours' ride from Kizilkilisa.

Descrying horses in the direction of Ani, we galloped forward and overtook them; they proved to be our missing cavalcade.

They had passed the river at a place lower down than where we had crossed it, and were pursuing their way in a most leisurely manner. After opening one of the cases in order to replenish the slides of the camera, we returned to the glen, and again forded the stream. We spent a considerable time at the cloister and in its neighbourhood; it was certainly the most remarkable building which we had yet seen. Reserving a description of its ancient church and halls of audience, I shall only refer to a couple of illustrations in this place. The one (Fig. 93, p. 386) shows the *ensemble* of the monastery; but, having been taken from the east, where the ground is open and the landscape tame, misses the peculiar characteristics of the site. The other (Fig. 94, p. 387) may convey some conception of the appearance of the glen, when seen from the river-bed below the cloister. From the flat and water-worn bottom rises a little tongue of higher land, upon which stand the remains of two little chapels. On the cliff above the ravine you see the pier of a ruined gateway, outlined against the sky. The track to Ani leads up the cliffside and passes that ruin, which stands on the plain in which the still-distant city lies.

It was late afternoon when we reached the walls of the ancient capital (Fig. 70, p. 369), and passed within the great gateway. No massive doors creaked upon their hinges; we rode through empty archways into a deserted town. From among the débris of the public and private buildings rose the well-preserved remains of a number of handsome edifices—here an elegant church, there a polygonal chapel. An old priest with a few attendants were the sole inhabitants—they and the owls. We had only to follow the track to be brought to the humble tenement in which the priest lived. He stepped forth to meet us, a grey head, a feeble figure; he walked with difficulty, and with the demeanour of a man who is awaiting death. He told us that he had dwelt here since 1880, the only custodian of these priceless architectural treasures, and the only exponent of the topography of the site. He had been attacked in his house by a band of Kurds in 1886; they had inflicted knife wounds, and stripped him of everything he possessed. We remained two whole days within the walls of Ani, examining the creations of a vanished civilisation, and collecting material with which I propose to deal in a separate chapter. At nine o'clock on the morning of the 19th of October we took leave of our aged host; and,

leaving the city by the same gate through which we had entered it, pursued a track which leads in the direction of Kars.

Clouds were clinging to the hill slopes upon our point of course and concealing the shield-shaped mass of Alagöz. Lost fragments of opaline vapour lay on the surface of the grassy plain. Here and there we perceived the ruins of little chapels and other buildings, or the scattered débris of masonry. From these suburbs we looked back upon the bold line of the city walls, with their double girdle and towers at regular intervals. It seemed as though the stream of life had wandered off into other channels, leaving behind this eloquent evidence of its former course. We could not descry the form of man or of animal in the landscape; even the sky was without a wing. We rode in silence and at ease along a beaten path, where the burnt herbage had been worn away from the rich brown soil. West of Ani, at a distance which leaves the site of the city open, rises a hill of irregular shape and moderate elevation, known as the Alaja Dagh. It is due to volcanic action, and covers a respectable area; its sides and summits are overgrown with grass. It is placed across the direct line between Kars and the ancient capital, and compels you to deviate a little to the north. As we rose along the north-eastern slopes of the mass, we were lifted at a convenient altitude above the plains.

Outspread before us lay a vast extent of undulating ground, on the south, on the east, towards the north. After we had passed the small Armenian village of Jala, we could just discern in the lap of the expanse the city of Alexandropol, at a distance of over twenty miles. We had again opened out the northern slopes of Alagöz; and we could even see the meridional range which intersects it upon the east, and the gap through which we had journeyed to Erivan. When one reflects upon the significance of this panorama, it must be recognised that our standpoint on the skirts of the Alaja deserves a high rank among those apposite and commanding positions which Armenia appears to lavish upon her admirers, and which imprint her features indelibly upon the mind.

We might be said to have been standing on the dividing line between two landscapes and even of two climates. On the north lay the immense plains around Kars and Alexandropol, vague and grey in spite of the clear atmosphere, and with their distant limits shrouded in haze. These pass over, along the course of

the deeply-bedded Arpa, into the ever-widening valley of the Araxes, bathed at all seasons in sun. Had it not been for the projecting spurs of the hill which we were skirting, the prospect would have embraced the peaks of the Ararat system, bounding the expanse upon the south. Snow had fallen upon the upper slopes of the mountains — Alagöz, no longer a shield but a towering parapet; the Chaldir system, the border range in the far east.



FIG. 69. GREEK GIRL OF SUBOTAN.

As we proceeded towards the west, the instructive lesson was developed—no ridge to cross, but continuous tracts of level land. The plain rises with gentle gradation from the right bank of the Arpa to the labyrinth of hills on the west of Kars. Its surface is slightly vaulted, and the configuration of the ground is such that you lose the outlook towards the east. We passed through Subotan, a prosperous village of Turks and Greeks. The gay dresses of the Greek girls formed a brilliant

patch of colour, and their trinkets sparkled in the sun, which was already high (Fig. 69). Education is provided in a little school-house, built and maintained at the charges of the Christian inhabitants, but supplied with a teacher by the State. A little further on we entered a second and smaller settlement, and again found ourselves among Greeks. I am under the impression that these scattered colonies date from the campaigns of Paske-vich, when Christians in considerable numbers accompanied his armies across the frontier after their evacuation of Turkish territory.

On and on we rode over the spacious plain, beating the brown and idle soil, with nothing to divert us from the simple pleasure of cantering along. Vague tracks came converging towards us from the distance, the arteries along which the supplies of the fortress flow. It was evident that there was a pronounced slope of the ground upwards; and, at length, on the western horizon we opened out a long, low ridge, against which we could just discern without the aid of glasses the yellow masonry of the castle of Kars (Fig. 98, p. 406). As we neared the site, we were impressed by its strange and romantic character. From the hills upon the west a mass of gloomy basalt projects towards the east into the level and loamy land. Concave towards the plain, to which it presents a line of cliffs, it forms an extensive bay and terminates on the east in a commanding promontory, called the Karadagh. The answering horn of this sinuous line is composed or accentuated by the cluster of modern buildings which the Russians have erected, and which jut out from the ancient city on the side of the cliff into the even ground. Their white faces and iron roofing, coloured a quiet red or green, present a contrast to the black masonry which mounts the slope behind them—groups of houses, a few minarets, a large church. Above these towers the well-preserved pile of the old castle—an object which is rendered the more conspicuous by the yellow stone of which it is composed. Further eastwards along the summit of the ridge you see the ruins of the old Armenian fortress, with the remains of a wall rising towards it from the foot of the cliff. In the bay itself you will always find a confused medley of sheep and cattle, of bullock-carts threading the piles of hay and stores. We were met and challenged by a gendarme upon our arrival, but were allowed to proceed to a modest inn.

I am conscious of having hazarded to tire my reader with the

continuous narrative of a journey of four days' duration and of more than the usual variety of interest. Anxious to avoid diverting his attention from the features of the country, I have not suffered him to rest, as we rested, at Ani; but have taken him without a break from the sunny depressions at the foot of Ararat to the wintry highlands about Kars. He has almost traversed from east to west one of the central regions of Armenia; and I would ask him to reflect that he has not crossed a single mountain barrier, but has throughout been riding upon the margin or over the surface of immense plains. In so far as it may be possible to parcel out this level surface, a triple division is suggested to the mind. In the north the basin-like area of the plain of Alexandropol (5000 feet) declines along the banks of the Arpa Chai; on the western side of the river the ground again rises and develops into the spacious plain of Kars (5700 feet). In the south lies the sheltered valley of the Araxes, commencing on the west with an elevation, in the neighbourhood of the confluence of the Arpa, which is rather less than 3000 feet above the sea.

CHAPTER XVIII

ANI, AND THE ARMENIAN KINGDOM OF THE MIDDLE AGES

In Europe we may find examples of mediæval towns from which the tide of life has long since receded, and which have been preserved almost intact to the present day. Less fortune attends the footsteps of the traveller in Armenia, until he arrives before the walls and towers of the city on the Arpa Chai. It is perhaps to the complete desolation of the neighbourhood that is due this welcome surprise. No settlement has arisen in the immediate vicinity to despoil these architectural remains. Favoured by the dryness of the Armenian climate, the pink volcanic stone displays all the freshness of the day when it was fashioned by the mason's tool. Even lichen has failed to effect much hold upon its surface, while our persistent ivies and sweet, irresistible wallflowers have not adventured into these sunny and treeless plains. We admire these buildings in much the same state and condition as when they delighted the eyes of Armenian monarchs nine centuries ago. Such a site would in Western lands be at least occupied by a small town or village; the solitude of Ani is not shared by any such presence; and the mood engendered by the spectacle of her many noble monuments is not disturbed by the contrast of commonplace successors or of miserable tenements, clinging to the creations of a culture that has disappeared.

The impression of the ancient city which is perhaps likely to prove most permanent is due to the aspect from without of that long row of double walls with their even masonry and graceful towers at intervals (Fig. 70, p. 369). How well they are seen from the floor of this plain without limits; how strange they

look among surroundings which scarcely display a trace of man! When we reflect that we are face to face with the capital of a kingdom, towards which the roads converged from every direction, and which was situated in the midst of a fertile province, famous for the production of corn, we are the more affected by the bareness and the loneliness of the countryside, which is only traversed here and there by a few vague tracks. Years upon years have elapsed since district and city throbbed with the pulse of human life. Yet if the Present be quite voiceless, the Past is doubly eloquent; and by reason not only of these many memorials, with their countless inscriptions, but also happily because of the comparative richness of the material which has been preserved in literature. In the case of many an old Armenian city, of which we shall visit the scanty remains, we have to deplore the broken skein of History. Ani has been better treated both by Time and by written records; and the dynasty which produced her splendour still lives in the lifelike narrative of the most attractive of the Armenian writers of that age.[1]

In the ninth century of our era the plains and mountains of Armenia were divided between the two great contemporary Powers which held sway in the East. The western portion of the country formed a part of the Roman Empire; while that on the east, comprising by far the largest and most populous area, was subject to the caliphs at Baghdad. The span of this single century is sufficient to include the full splendour and the decay and incipient disruption of the caliphate. At its commencement Harun-al-Rashid (786-809) was real master of vast dominions—a personality round which the romance of the age collected to adorn the literature of all times. Before its close many of these possessions had become parcelled out among petty dynasties, whose titular overlord—a Mutaz (866-869), a Muhtadi (869-870), a Mutamid (870-892)—was scarcely better than a puppet in the hands of his Turkish bodyguard. Such was the period and such the political environment in which the Armenian dynasty of the Middle Ages rose by successive steps to the position of Kings of Armenia—a rank which was recognised by their co-religionists, the Greek Cæsars, but which was conferred or confirmed by the

[1] John Katholikos. He has been translated by Saint-Martin (Paris, 1841, a posthumous work). His History, which for a large part is a history of his own times, does not quite bring us down to the constitution of Ani into a royal residence.

Commander of the Faithful, within whose realm their dominions lay.[1]

The native institutions of the Armenian people were not unfavourable to such a development. At the present day they cannot be said to possess a class of nobles, and they are devoid of natural leaders. But in the ninth century their councils were governed by a strong territorial nobility, a relic of the period when they possessed their own independent kings of Arsakid descent. The Arsakid dynasty had struggled on into the fifth century, when it succumbed to the Sasanian monarchy of Persia and Mesopotamia, and a Persian governor was sent to rule over the land (A.D. 428). But the great nobles maintained and perhaps increased their ascendency; they were supported by the obstinate patriotism of the people; and the interval between the overthrow of the ancient and the rise of the mediæval kingdom is filled by the almost incessant clash of arms. From the east the pertinacity of the Armenian race is challenged at first by the Persians, eager to convert them to the religion of the Magi, and next by the Arabs, who, after supplanting the Sasanian dynasty, seek to impose upon them the precepts of Islam. Their neighbours upon the west are scarcely less obtrusive; and we may discover beneath the religious controversies with their fellow-Christians of the Roman Empire the same fervid self-assertion which has enabled this strange people to preserve, in the face of odds which appear to us to have been overwhelming, the inflexible individuality of their race. While their clergy are resisting the menaces or the blandishments of the Church of the Empire, their nobles are combating the worship of the Persians or of the Mohammedans at the head of the native levies. It thus happened that, when the bonds relaxed which bound the subject states to the Arab caliphate, the Armenians possessed, in their class of nobles as well as in their patriarchate, institutions which had been tested in the furnace of adversity during a period of over 400 years.

Two Armenian families of princely rank were conspicuous at that time. The Artsruni had extended their possessions during the domination of the Arabs, until they comprised a vast territory and some of the richest districts in the neighbourhood

[1] The vanity of the Byzantine court denied them the actual title of king; and the imperial author, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, translates the Persian distinction which they afterwards acquired, that of Shahanshah, by the term ἄρχων ἀρχόντων.

of the ancient city of Van. They claimed descent from one of the kings of Assyria, whose two sons were reputed to have escaped to Armenia after having perpetrated parricide. They drew their name from the lofty office which had been bestowed upon their ancestor, that of bearing before the Arsakid king the emblem of the golden eagle—an emblem which is cherished by the Armenian inhabitants of Van at the present day as the distinctive ensign of their city and province. The family of the Bagratuni or Bagratids had attained a position in the centre and north of Armenia which rivalled and perhaps surpassed that of the Artsruni in the south. Of Jewish origin, they were already powerful in the earliest Arsakid times, when they had been invested with the hereditary privilege of crowning the king. Their ancient seats appear to have been placed in the Chorokh country, in the vicinity of the town of Ispir. But this nucleus became lost in the territory which they subsequently acquired, whether by marriage or by conquest. The province of Shirak, by which is designated the extensive grain-growing district on the right bank of the Arpa Chai, was perhaps the richest appanage of their House; but they were masters of the Armenian districts on the side of Georgia, while towards the west and south their possessions at one time extended into the plain of Pasin and the fertile districts about the present town of Mush. A branch of this same family established themselves in Georgia - the salubrious uplands and rich plains at the southern foot of Caucasus, which are separated from the highlands of Armenia by the belt of mountains on the right bank of the river Kur. The Georgians, like the Armenians, professed the Christian religion, and at the period with which we are dealing were being harassed by the Arab caliphs. During the decline of the caliphate, when native impulses were revived in Georgia as well as in Armenia, the movement centred in a dynasty of Bagratid descent. This dynasty outlived that of their kinsmen in Armenia by many centuries. The Georgian sovereigns weathered the storm of Seljuk invasion in the eleventh century, which swept before it the feeble thrones of the Armenian monarchs. Perhaps they owed their escape in part to the geographical position of their country, removed as it was by a zone of intricate mountains from the highway of the Armenian plains. Yet their capital, Tiflis, fell a prey to the same sultan who captured Ani, the famous Alp Arslan. During the first half of the twelfth century they

were successful in expelling the invaders, and a little later their kingdom was increased to the limits of an extensive empire during the reign of the great queen Thamar. The Georgian Bagratids maintained their throne until the end of the eighteenth century, when the last king renounced his crown in favour of the Russian Tsars.[1]

About the middle of the ninth century, to which I return from this brief digression, the reigning caliph, Mutawakil, despatched an army into Armenia with instructions to punish the inhabitants and to bring them over to the Mohammedan faith. His severity had been invited by the behaviour of his subjects, who had fallen upon and killed their Arab governor. The Arab commander, by name Bugha, acquitted himself of his congenial mission in a manner which accords with the best traditions of Eastern statecraft. He crossed the Taurus, descended into the plains about the Murad, and took prisoners all the Armenian chiefs of the districts through which his route lay. The Bagratid family had become involved in the preceding troubles; one of their members was already in the hands of the caliph; and his two sons were now added to the train of the avenging general, who directed his march from the territory of Taron (Mush) to that of Vaspurakan (Van). The Artsruni were not more fortunate in their resistance; their prince was captured, loaded with chains, and sent to the caliph. Bugha pursued a leisurely course through the Armenian country, giving over to the sword the less prominent among the people, selecting some for their birth or personal qualities as worthy of conversion to Islam. When he arrived at the capital of central Armenia, the city of Dvin, in the neighbourhood of the present town of Erivan, which had been conquered by the Arabs in A.D. 642,[2] he was met by a native prince who bore the title of commander-in-chief[3] and the name of Sembat. This notable was the great-grandson of a distinguished Bagratid chief, Ashot, who had been entrusted with the government of Armenia by the last of the Ommiad caliphs, and who had been deprived of sight by his

[1] For the Artsruni and the Bagratuni I will refer my reader to Saint-Martin (*Mémoires sur l'Arménie*, Paris, 1818, vol. i. pp. 418 *seq.*); for the Georgian Bagratuni to Brosset (*Histoire de la Géorgie, Histoire ancienne*, St. Petersburg, 1849, Addition IX.).

[2] Dulaurier (*Recherches sur la Chronologie Arménienne*, Paris, 1859, pp. 227 *seq.*).

[3] *Sparapet.* This and the other Armenian titles of the age had come down from Arsakid times, having survived the destruction of monarchy. A family retained its title even when the functions which it designated were no longer capable of fulfilment (Saint-Martin, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 420).

countrymen, incensed at his Arab proclivities. According to the Armenians, this Ashot was the progenitor alike of the Georgian sovereigns and of the Armenian dynasty of the Middle Ages. His descendant endeavoured to propitiate the tyrant, who appeared to listen to his fair words. But Sembat was conveyed to Baghdad with the rest of the prisoners, and accompanied the triumphal return of the caliph's legate. Arrived at court, the Armenian princes were offered the choice of Islam and freedom or a painful and violent death. Sembat was one of those who refused to abjure his religion and who perished as a martyr to the Christian faith (A.D. 856 [C.]).[1]

The pompous title of the deceased chieftain, together with his influence, descended to his son Ashot. This prince had contrived to escape the meshes of the Moslem net; and in the period which immediately followed the departure of the Arab general he proved himself worthy to sustain the burden of his high position. In the flower of his age, he enjoyed the union of imposing physical qualities with habits of mind which gave peculiar weight to his counsels, and with a natural suavity of disposition and expression. An agreeable face—in which, however, the eyes, with their heavy black eyebrows, were shot with blood, like a speck of red upon a pearl—was set around with a magnificent beard, and sprang from broad shoulders in keeping with his fine stature. Whatever defects might belong to such an exterior were compensated by the habitual purity of his life. The prince was missed at the sumptuous banquets of the rich, but his presence was felt by the poor in every action of their daily life. He once said, "The service of humanity is a life-long service"; and his precept was illustrated by the example of his own long life. How far the qualities of the son of Sembat were instrumental in obtaining a reversal of the policy of the caliphate, or whether the complete change which ensued in the treatment of the Armenians may have been due to causes of a different order, our historian has omitted to relate. Five years after the martyrdom of his father and of the leading nobles of his country, Ashot is invested by the new Arab governor with the

Ashot I., A.D. 856-889 or 890.

[1] The dates which I have taken from Chamchean's *History of Armenia* I have labelled C. Some are taken from the original work in Armenian; others from the abridged edition translated into English and entitled *History of Armenia by Father Michael Chamich*, translated by J. Avdall, Calcutta, 1827, 2 vols. 8vo. Those marked D. have been fixed by Dulaurier (*op. cit.*). Saint-Martin is my authority for some dates.

title of *prince of princes*, and becomes the recipient of almost royal distinctions (A.D. 861 [D.]).[1] Those of the nobles who had become apostates during the recent persecution openly return to their old faith. For twenty-five years he continues to exercise his authority, which reposes not only upon the goodwill of the Arab governor, but also upon the loyalty of his fellow-nobles, who consent that his family shall be assigned a special and quasi-royal rank, and be permanently elevated above all other princely families. At the end of this period the Armenian nobility unanimously petition the caliph in favour of the elevation of their prince to the rank of king. Their desire is conveyed to their suzerain by his representative in the country, a governor by name Isa. It is accorded with the greatest readiness. A royal crown is despatched, and placed by Isa himself upon the head of Ashot. Armenian royalty is revived in this branch of the Bagratid family after an interval of over 450 years (A.D. 885 [D.]). The reigning Cæsar, Basil I., confirms this investiture, and accompanies the friendly sentiments of an attached ally and a spiritual father with the gift of a crown, the second to be worn by the new monarch.[2]

For five years Ashot continued in the exercise of his kingly prerogative, supported by the Armenian nobles, the most powerful of whom he attached by marriage, and enjoying the favour both of the Caliph and of the Emperor. His capital was the city of Bagaran, on the banks of the Akhurean, the modern Arpa Chai, situated to the south of the later capital at Ani.[3] He died in advanced age (A.D. 889 [C.] or 890 [D.])[4] and with unimpaired reputation at a date when the empire of the caliphs was in process of dismemberment, and when a number of petty Mussulman dynasties, such as the Tahirids and the Saffarids, had arisen in the adjacent lands.[5] We can scarcely doubt that his elevation was occasioned by the decline of the central authority; and he and his descendants were glad to purchase by the promise of an

[1] Thomas Artsruni specifies the length of the various stages in the career of Ashot. See Dulaurier (*op. cit.* pp. 266 *seq.*). The date 861 corresponds with the last year of the caliph Mutawakil and the first of the reign of Muntasir. Lane Poole, *Mohammedan Dynasties*, London, 1894.

[2] Kirakos, quoted by Dulaurier (*op. cit.*).

[3] For discussions of the site of Bagaran (Pakaran) see Ritter (*Erdkunde*, vol. x. p. 449), and also Abich (*Aus kaukasischen Ländern*, Vienna, 1896, p. 203).

[4] Chamchean and Saint-Martin place the death of Ashot in A.D. 889. But see Dulaurier (*op. cit.* p. 365).

[5] The Tahirids became practically independent in Khorasan A.D. 820-872; they were dispossessed by the Saffarids of Fars and Seistan, A.D. 867-903.

assured tribute the greater independence of the Armenian people and their own ascendency.

Sembat I., A.D. 890-914.

At the time of the death of Ashot I. his son and successor Sembat was absent on an expedition of conquest in the country of the Upper Kur. He received the homage of his subjects upon his arrival at Erazgavors, a town in Shirak, which was his own particular residence. Thither repaired the prince of Georgia, Aternerseh, himself a Bagratid, proffering his sympathy and his aid (A.D. 890 [C.]). The succession was hotly disputed by Abas, brother of the deceased monarch, a vain and ambitious prince. His animosity appears to have been directed in the principal degree against the prince of Georgia; he broke the peace which he was induced to make at the instance of the patriarch with that potentate, and at length he turned his arms against the province of Shirak. The approach of Sembat at the head of a numerous army compelled him to take refuge in a strong place, and his condition was desperate when he obtained from the clemency of his royal nephew a pardon which he had not deserved. Sembat was already in possession of supreme power when he received from the Arab governor of Azerbaijan[1] on behalf of the caliph a royal crown such as had been bestowed upon his father. At the same time he confirmed the friendly relations which had subsisted between Ashot and the Byzantine Empire. The reigning emperor, Leo VI., received his ambassadors with great distinction, and dismissed them charged with valuable presents. In the missives between them the king of Armenia was addressed as a beloved son, and the Cæsar with the reverence due to a father. Nor was this intercourse confined to a single and a splendid occasion; it appears to have been renewed every year. It naturally excited the jealousy of the Arab governor of Azerbaijan, the powerful neighbour of the new state upon the east.

This individual, by name Afshin, is depicted by the priestly historian with all the resources of the vocabulary of hate. He is a wild beast; he is armed with the poignard of perfidy, and his death is described as the outcome of a loathsome malady which destroyed the body before the soul descended to hell. Throughout the reign we see him harassing the dominions of the Armenian monarch; but his first expedition appears to have

[1] Azerbaijan is, of course, the frontier province of Persia on the side of Armenia, having for capital the city of Tabriz.

been met by a vigorous and successful resistance, which no doubt helped the remonstrances of Sembat. At the head of his troops the king reasoned with his Mohammedan adversary, and represented that his friendship with the emperor of the Greeks was to the advantage of the master of Afshin. "You yourselves," he said, "may at any moment have need of the support of the Greeks, and your merchants require openings in Greek territory, whence they will draw riches which will swell the treasury at Baghdad." These advances were met on the part of the Arab governor by the offer of a peace, which was duly ratified. Afshin returned to Azerbaijan, and the king retraced his steps up the Araxes and appeared before the walls of Dvin. This city, which was at this period the acknowledged capital of Armenia, was reduced to an obedience from which it had lapsed. Its situation in the neighbourhood of the present town of Erivan was calculated to invest it with the character of a strong place on the side of the Arab possessions in Persia. Its subjection to Sembat does not appear to have been of long duration; during the subsequent portion of his reign we find it in the hands of the Mohammedans, serving, it would seem, as an advanced base to the troops of Afshin and of his successor.

The diplomacy no less than the prowess of Sembat was successful in other directions nearer home. If his kingdom remained essentially feudal in character, its limits were at least extended over the adjacent lands. On the west his sovereignty was acknowledged as far as the city of Karin, the modern Erzerum; while on the north-east and east it embraced the foot of Caucasus and the shore of the Caspian Sea. The Armenian princes who ruled in the country on the southern side of the barrier of mountains which culminate in Ararat were attached to him by feudal or family ties; his name must at least have been respected among his countrymen beyond the limits of the lake of Van. His ascendency was for a second time challenged by Afshin, who advanced to Nakhichevan and Dvin; but he led his troops in person against the Mussulmans, and inflicted upon them a signal defeat. The subsequent defection to his enemy of his nephew, the prince of Vaspurakan (Van), who was joined for a time by the prince of Siunik, a province bordering that of Van upon the north, does not appear to have materially shaken his power; we find him directing his attention to the outer limits of his territory, and endeavouring

to establish his dominion not only over the country of Taron (Mush), but also as far south as the Mesopotamian plains.

This advance brought him into collision with an Arab emir, named Ahmed, who, in the decay of the caliphate, cherished pretensions to these districts. The Armenian prince of Taron was unable to withstand his Mussulman adversary, and Sembat was obliged to take the field in person (A.D. 896 [C.]). At the head of a numerous army he marched towards Taron, west of which his enemy was encamped. The reverse of his arms was due to the treachery of a countryman, a prince belonging to the province of Vaspurakan; and, indeed, the jealousy of the chiefs of the Van country seems to have paved the way for the successes of his Mussulman neighbours. His old enemy Afshin was not slow to profit by this turn of fortune. After attempting in vain to seduce the loyalty of the northern feudatories of Sembat, he entered the province of Kars and laid siege to that fortress. Thither had taken refuge the Armenian queen, a daughter of the king of Kolchis, and several of the wives of the principal nobles. The capitulation of Kars and the capture of the queen came as a melancholy pendant to the disaster of the king's arms in the south. He was obliged to purchase peace on humiliating terms, and to give his niece in marriage to the Mohammedan potentate. But it was not long before hostilities were again resumed in the same quarter. Afshin directed his march towards the city of Tiflis, swept like a whirlwind through the Georgian country, and advanced upon Shirak. Sembat and his army were obliged to take refuge in the strong places of his ally Aternerseh, upon whom he had previously bestowed a royal crown; while his adversary, after having endeavoured in vain to sap the loyalty of the Georgian prince, retraced his steps along the Araxes to Azerbaijan. Afshin was meditating a fresh attack when he fell a victim to a malignant malady, which appears also to have made ravages among his troops (901 [St.-M.], 898-99 [D.]).

The tyrant was succeeded by his brother Yusuf in the government of Azerbaijan. Upon the accession of this potentate the Armenian monarch despatched an embassy to the caliph at Baghdad with the view of contracting a stable alliance with the nominal sovereign of Persia and of that portion of Armenia which lay within the Arab sphere. His advances were well received by the successor of the Prophet, who confirmed him in

his royal dignity.[1] Although Yusuf continued to pursue the hostile policy of his predecessor, he appears to have been thwarted by the greater readiness of Sembat. Armenia enjoyed a short respite from the inroads of the Mussulmans. "At this period," says our historian, who is fond of allegory, "our Saviour visited the country of the Armenians, and protected their lives and property. Lands were bestowed, vines were planted and groves of olive-trees; the most ancient fruit-trees yielded their fruits. The harvests produced corn in excessive abundance; the cellars were filled with wine when the vintage had been gathered in. The mountains were in great joy, and so were the herdsmen and the shepherds, because of the quantity of pasturage and the increase in the flocks. The chiefs and notables of our country lived in perfect security and were not afraid of depredations; they were free to bestow their leisure and zeal upon the construction of churches in solid stone, with which they graced the towns, the open country, and the desert places." The king enjoyed the favour of his Byzantine ally, and the gifts of Heaven were supplemented by the imperial presents. The ambition of the king of Kolchis, who was striving to extend his dominions eastwards at the expense of his relative, the Armenian monarch, was restrained by a conjunction of the Armenian forces with those of the king of Georgia; the unhappy kinglet was taken prisoner and lodged in a fortress, from which he was released by the clemency of his captor and restored to his possessions. This mild treatment of a rival excited the jealousy of Aternersch; the attached ally became converted into a perfidious enemy; and the incident, while it seems to mark the culmination of this brighter era, was the prelude of the domestic and foreign calamities in which the reign of Sembat was brought to a tragic close.

A curious incident now occurs, which is characteristic of the times (A.D. 905 [St.-M.]). Yusuf prepares in secret to sever his allegiance to the caliph, and goes so far as to issue orders in his own name. Apprised of his proceedings, the sovereign at Baghdad sends messengers throughout his dominions to effect a rising against his rebellious servant. One of the highest in rank of these envoys arrives at the court of the Armenian monarch, and delivers a personal letter requiring the prince to assemble his

[1] Saint-Martin, following Chamchean, attributes another motive to this embassy. Sembat was desirous of severing his connection with the governor of Azerbaijan and of dealing directly with the caliph. Saint-Martin adds that the Caliph Muktafi, who had just succeeded (A.D. 902), granted the request.

forces and to march against the emir of Azerbaijan. As an inducement, the vassal is remitted the payment of a year's tribute. This request or command was at once difficult to comply with and impossible to elude or reject. Sembat was bound to Yusuf by the terms of a treaty, and still more forcibly deterred from offending his neighbour by motives of interest. It was only natural that he should have recourse to perfidy, the usual expedient in such circumstances among Eastern princes. But his double-dealing was of transitory advantage: and it may, perhaps, be excused by the reflection that his own weight would have been insufficient to turn the scale to the advantage of either side. Yusuf affected submission to his spiritual and temporal superior; the Armenians were confronted by a coalition of the contending influences; and the unhappy king was besieged by emissaries from both the Mussulman princes, demanding the arrears of tribute in imperious terms. On four occasions he had succeeded in acquitting his obligations by making the prescribed payment in kind; but this time he was compelled to discharge the debt in money, and to impose taxes which strained the structure of his feudal rule.

A combination of some of the nobles with Aternerseh of Georgia was the outcome of these events. Ani, which was then a fortress, was handed over to Aternerseh, together with the treasures of the royal palace at Erazgavors. Sembat at the head of his forces hurried back to Shirak, whereupon the conspirators evacuated the province, laden with spoils. The Armenian monarch carried the war into the territory of Aternerseh, who was constrained to sue for peace. Many of the revolted nobles fell into the hands of their sovereign, who, after putting out their eyes, dispatched some to the Byzantine emperor for custody and others to the king of Kolchis. This rising had no sooner been quelled than the reigning prince of Vaspurakan separated himself from the king. The cause of quarrel was a dispute about the town of Nakhichevan in the valley of the Araxes, which Sembat had conferred on another noble, but to which this prince had a hereditary claim. Gagik—such was his name—had recourse to the common enemy, Yusuf, who was eager to profit by such dissension among his Christian neighbours. The emir bestowed upon him a royal crown in order to perpetuate his rivalry with Sembat. It was all in vain that our historian, who was at that time patriarch, endeavoured to avert the rising storm. He even journeyed to

the court of the emir in Azerbaijan, taking with him magnificent presents, among which were included some of the sacred vessels belonging to the churches. He was treated with distinction by his Mussulman host so long as his gifts held out. When these were exhausted he was thrown into prison, where he lingered for a considerable time. The hardships of his condition were aggravated by the mortification which he must have experienced at the complete failure of his good offices. He was strictly refused an audience of his countryman, King Gagik, who shortly afterwards arrived at the court of Yusuf in order to concert an invasion of the territory of Sembat. At the approach of spring the emir set out for Armenia, taking with him the unhappy patriarch, loaded with chains. In the neighbourhood of Nakhichevan were received the messengers of Gagik, who announced the approach of their master with his troops (A.D. 909 [St. M.]). Sembat endeavoured to pacify his enemy by a payment of money, which the emir swallowed without arresting his advance. The king was quite unable to cope with the forces arrayed against him ; he fled to the fortresses of Georgia, whither he was pursued by his implacable adversary.

It is unnecessary to follow in detail the developments of a situation, of which the historical interest consists in the light which it throws upon the Armenian monarchy of the Middle Ages, and upon the relations of that monarchy to the neighbouring states. We see the Artsrunian prince of the extensive province of Vaspurakan turning his arms against his own countrymen and their Bagratid king, and in active alliance with the enemies of his religion and race. The Mussulman horsemen overran the fertile plains of Armenia, and the tardy repentance of Gagik came too late. Sembat appealed in vain to the suzerain at Baghdad, who was too much occupied by domestic troubles to intervene. Better success attended his entreaties at the Byzantine court, and his old friend, Leo, collected troops and marched in person to his assistance. The death of the emperor at the inception of the enterprise, and the internal troubles of the new reign, removed all hope of succour from the side of the Roman provinces. The Christian state in the heart of Asia seemed doomed to destruction, and the king and queen were taken prisoners. Sembat was conducted to Dvin, where he was barbarously tortured in the presence of the populace. Every indignity was inflicted upon him, and each refinement of Oriental cruelty ; after he had expired, his body

was nailed to a wooden stake and exhibited to the townspeople (A.D. 914 [C.]).

A desperate effort was made by his son Ashot to retrieve the fortunes of the Armenian arms. He expelled the Mohammedans from many of the fortified places which they had occupied, and allied himself closely with the king of Georgia, who placed the crown of Armenia upon his head. Yusuf was not slow to revenge the reverses of his adherents, and the whole country was given over to war. The wretched inhabitants fled to the mountains and the deserts; the remnant wandered about in a state of nakedness, and experienced all the tortures of famine. When winter came thousands perished in the snow. If they fell into the hands of the enemy they were either massacred or subjected to every description of torture. In many cases they were offered liberty and even affluence if they would abjure the Christian religion; but these advances were almost always without effect. Our historian relates with pride the tragic incidents of this period of martyrdom; and the profession of faith which he puts in the mouth of one of the victims is worthy of the highest conceptions of religious minds. "We are Christians," exclaimed a young noble in the presence of Yusuf; "we believe in God, Who is Truth and Who dwells in the midst of Light without limits." These afflictions might have excited the compassion of their Christian neighbours. But perhaps these neighbours were conscious of their own helplessness; they preferred to ride on the wave of the Mussulman invasion, and to share in the spoils of the Armenian provinces. Whole towns were destroyed and whole countrysides depopulated; while the nobles, instead of combining, were involved in civil war. This state of affairs continued for no less than seven years, exhausting the country and denuding it of cultivation. "We sow, but we do not reap; we plant, but gather not the fruit; the fig-tree bears not, and the vine and olive-tree are barren. We collect a little and abandon the rest." Page after page our author unfolds the tale of all the miseries which were endured by himself and his countrymen. He himself was a refugee at the court of the king of Georgia, where he was in correspondence with the patriarch of Constantinople. It was the aim of Byzantine policy to unite the Christian nations of Transcaucasia with the Armenians; and the historian, as the spiritual head of the latter people, used his best endeavours towards this end. Issuing from his retreat, he made his way to the province of

Ashot II. (Erkath), A.D. 915-928.

Taron (Mush), whence he addressed a long missive to the Byzantine Cæsar (A.D. 920 [C.]). In touching terms he entreated him to become the avenger of the Armenian Christians, whom he represented as the spiritual sons and servants of Constantine. At his instance the Byzantine court despatched an imperial legate to the son of Sembat, with the view of renewing the relations which had subsisted between his father and the deceased ruler of the Eastern Empire. Our writer met this envoy in the territory of Taron, and accompanied him to the presence of Ashot. The prince returned with the legate to Constantinople (A.D. 921 [C.]), where he was received in a manner becoming his royal rank. He was addressed as the son of a martyr and the spiritual son of the Cæsar, was arrayed in purple and invested with the insignia of royalty. Meanwhile the historian was sojourning in the province of Terjan, a district which has retained its name to the present day. He naïvely exhibits the difficulties of his position, endeavouring, as he was, to avoid complying with the pressing invitations to the imperial city which were lavished upon him by his spiritual brothers of the Greek Church. He was deterred by the fear that he would be pressed to conform to the doctrine which had been laid down at the Council of Chalcedon. His peregrinations brought him to the scenes where St. Gregory the Illuminator passed his later years in the seclusion of an anchorite. He describes the cavern where the saint lived, and where his remains were deposited, to be removed by an angel to a grave in the vicinity. His account of this lonely place, so difficult of access, agrees in a striking manner with that of a modern traveller, which it invests with an impressive reality.[1] The patriarch found the district inhabited by anchorites, who maintained an altar in the holy cave.

In the meantime Yusuf had become embroiled with his old ally of Vaspurakan, and the war was being carried into the southern province. A vigorous resistance was offered by King Gagik, who owed his title to his enemy. Hostilities appear to have lingered on without decisive result. Such was the state of affairs when King Ashot II. returned to his dominions, accompanied by several generals of the Roman Empire, together with

[1] Eugène Boré (*Correspondance et Mémoires*, Paris, 1840, vol. ii. p. 28). The place is situated in the neighbourhood of the town of Erzinjan, and the historian mentions the adjacent village of Tortan, which still appears to exist and to be known under that name. I have not been able to trace it upon any map; but the monastery of Surb Lusavorich and Mount Sepuh, the modern Kohanam Dagh, will be found indicated upon my map, accompanying this work.

a considerable detachment of the imperial troops. This material support, as well as a subsidy in money, enabled him to recover his position among his feudatories; and we may conclude that the relations between himself and King Gagik had become improved by the change in the attitude of the latter towards the Mussulman emir. But that crafty statesman knew too well the weak spots in the political organisation of the Armenians. If two kings did not suffice to divide his opponents, it could do no harm and might bring him fortune to create a third. His choice fell upon a cousin of King Ashot, who had previously been invested by that monarch with the title of general-in-chief. His name, which was also Ashot, introduces further confusion into the turbid narrative of the priestly historian. The stage becomes filled with a crowd of nobles, contending with each other and combining to mutual destruction round the persons of the two Ashots. Behind these figures emerge those of the king of Kolchis and the king of Georgia, while in the background we perceive the light cavalry of the Mohammedans and the gorgeous functionaries of the Byzantine Empire. It is scarcely possible during this troubled period to follow the threads of the emir's policy. No sooner has he placed a crown upon the forehead of the one Ashot, than he invests the other with similar insignia of royalty.[1] Nor does the king of the Van country yield in splendour to his colleagues; the caliph himself sends him a crown and magnificent robes. This act excites the fury of the emir of Azerbaijan, who presently revolts from his sovereign at Baghdad. His capture and imprisonment removed for awhile the sword suspended over the head of Gagik, and were the occasion of a general although transitory improvement in the condition of the Armenian provinces. The caliph sent one of the highest in rank of the officers about his person to take over the administration of the province of his rebellious emir. This official not only concluded a treaty of peace and alliance with Ashot II. (son of King Sembat), but also conferred upon him the title of *Shahan-shah*, or king of kings. In this manner the Bagratid dynasty of Shirak recovered their titular sovereignty over Armenia; and the fact illustrates a marked divergence between the policy of the caliphate, which appears to have desired a strong Armenia, and that of the semi-independent emirs of Azerbaijan, who strove

[1] Chamchean accounts for this change of policy towards the legitimate king by supposing that Yusuf wished to conciliate him prior to revolting from the caliph.

incessantly to prepare the country for their own yoke. On the other hand, while the caliphs were anxious to secure a counterpoise to their turbulent governors, the Byzantine Cæsars were well pleased by any accretion of strength to a buffer state which was attached to themselves by community of faith.

Our historian was not spared to witness the splendour of this dynasty, as it is manifested in the noble buildings of their capital, Ani, which had not yet become a royal residence. His closing years were spent under a recrudescence of the old troubles—disunion from within and new inroads of the Mussulmans from without. The release of Yusuf restored this malefactor to the scene of his iniquities;[1] he crossed the Kurdish mountains, and descended into the territory of Vaspurakan. King Gagik was in arrears with several instalments of the annual tribute, and was obliged to collect all the available riches of his country and deliver them up to his implacable foe. Yusuf continued his journey to Persia, and, upon his arrival, sent one of his officers to assert his authority over the Armenian provinces. There ensued an era of constant activity on the part of the Mussulmans. The patriarch became a fugitive, taking refuge in the little island of Lake Sevan, and proceeding thence to a small castle in his own possession. But the enemy surrounded the place and took him prisoner, together with the companions of his flight. Escaping from their clutches, he made his way to the court of Ashot, who was residing in the royal palace of Bagaran; and the curtain falls upon his narrative while he is on a visit to King Gagik, with whom he appears to have maintained relations which were perhaps prompted by motives of interest, since the patriarchal palace and domains were situated within his dominions.[2] Panic had taken hold of the feudal levies, and his countrymen were being massacred (924 [C.]). In one of the closing sentences in which he describes that Reign of Terror he, in fact, resumes the larger history of his race: "Who can foretell our future? Spare me the attempt. We are like a harvest reaped by bad husbandmen amidst encircling gloom and cloud."[3]

We close these graphic pages with the feeling that we have been privileged to gain some insight into the state of the country

[1] I adopt the colouring of John Katholikos. Among the many opprobrious terms under which he alludes to Yusuf are the following: second Pharaoh, prince of wild beasts, man-eater, astute serpent, Satan, foul-breathed basilisk. Such is the language of clerical writers in every age.

[2] John Katholikos, ch. clxxxv.

[3] *Ibid.* ch. clxxxvii.

during the reigns of the Bagratid sovereigns, as well as to estimate the nature of their rule. If I have eliminated by this brief abstract whole chapters of our author, I may perhaps have saved my reader from becoming wearied by his declamations, and from losing the main thread of his thrilling narrative among the side issues in which he allows it to become involved. The sovereignty of the Bagratids was essentially feudal in character; and the loose ties of such a political organisation were ill adapted to withstand the strain to which they were subjected at the hands of their Mussulman neighbours. Indeed, the fact that such a dynasty could ever have arisen in the heart of Asia, among a people which could not have numbered more than a few millions of souls, can only be explained by the comparative weakness of their contemporaries professing the Mohammedan faith. The Armenian historians are fond of railing upon their countrymen on account of the internal divisions which precipitated their political fall. They are not less inclined to attribute the miseries of their nation to their desertion in critical moments by the Greek Empire. But they do not appear to have reflected that the frequent instances of treachery among the Armenian nobles need not have been due to any inherent defects in the character of the Armenian people. Similar examples abound in the annals of our European nations while they were still in the feudal stage of development. Again, the Greeks, while they were no doubt prejudiced by dogmatic differences, might, one cannot doubt, have established a good case for their abstention from more strenuous succour of the young state. Their subsidies were spent, and their troops were marched across Asia with little further result than the aggrandisement of one princelet at the expense of a competing claimant of the same race. The lesson which may be derived from a perusal of this contemporary record explains to us many points which would otherwise be obscure in the much more meagre annals of the subsequent period which witnessed the frail blossoming and premature destruction of the Armenian kingdom of the Middle Ages. When the hordes of Turks descended from the valleys of the Tien-shan and swept across the settled territories of Persia towards the richest portions of the Old World, they found upon the high road of the Armenian tableland a state which was as little adapted to provide a bulwark against their invasions as any other of the fissiparous fragments of the caliphs' empire.

Abas, A.D. 928-951.

The narrative of John the Patriarch brings us down to the closing years of Ashot, second king of that name. The picture which he has presented of the troubled reigns of these Bagratid sovereigns may enable us to dispense with the repetition of similar struggles during the reigns of their successors. Even were I permitted by the scope of this work and by the material at my disposal to assign to that later period the same proportion of space which has been devoted to the actions of the first three kings, I should run the risk of inflicting upon my reader the same fatigue which I have myself experienced by the perusal of a Samuel of Ani[1] and a Matthew of Edessa,[2] to say nothing of the industrious compilers of our own times. The storm-clouds, beneath which the work of the priestly annalist closes, appear to have lifted over the setting of Ashot's career; and a mild light envelops the reign of his brother Abas, who succeeded him on the throne. This tranquil era seems to have been induced by the weakness or somnolence of the neighbours of Abas. The activity of the Sajid family in Azerbaijan, which had been manifest in the exploits of Afshin and of Yusuf, came to an end at the commencement of his reign. The caliphate was becoming more and more the shadow of a reality; and the death of Radi (A.D. 940) removed the last of the successors of the Prophet who sustained a measure of personal power and prestige. In the West the Armenian monarch might observe without anxiety the enforced seclusion of the Cæsar, Constantine the Seventh, as well as the later application of his benignant mind to the affairs of state. Such a wholesome respite was employed by king and nobles in adorning Armenia with churches and monasteries. In the city of Kars, where Abas appears to have placed the seat of government, a cathedral of unusual grandeur rose into being.[3] The pugnacity of the race was exercised in fierce religious dissensions with the Church of the Empire. The western provinces, subject to the Cæsars and administered by them, were convulsed by the rival battle-cries of Greeks and Armenians, each imputing to the other heretical opinions upon the unfathomable subject of the divinity of Christ. Many Armenians took refuge within the dominions of the Bagratid king; and if their babes had been baptized according to the Greek ritual, the ceremony was

[1] Samuel of Ani, in Migne, *Patrologiæ cursus completus, series Græca*, vol. xix. p. 718.

[2] Matthew of Edessa, translated by Dulaurier (Paris, 1858).

[3] Samuel of Ani ap. Migne, *op. cit.* vol. xix. p. 718.

performed a second time by the jealous clergy of the Armenian Church (944 [C.]).

But it was under the next two reigns that the brilliancy of the dynasty attained the culminating point. Upon the death of Abas his son Ashot assumed the government; and it was perhaps due to a combination of domestic dissensions and war with his neighbours that for ten years he remained an uncrowned king. On the part of the Mussulmans, an Arab emir, whom the historians name Hamdun, and who may perhaps be identified with the powerful adversary of the Cæsars in Mesopotamia, Seif-ed-Daula of the Hamdanid family, made incursions into the southerly provinces of Armenia, and even threatened the dominions of Ashot. The signal victory of the Armenian monarch (A.D. 960)[1] appears to have gratified the caliph and his masters the Buwayhids, a petty dynasty which had arisen in Persia, and into whose hands had fallen Baghdad (945). The same event may have been instrumental in consolidating the power of Ashot at home. In the year 961 he was anointed king at Ani, in the presence and with the consent of the great nobles. The rulers of the neighbouring states, Mussulman and Christian, signified their goodwill by sending valuable presents. His suzerain at Baghdad bestowed upon him a royal crown, addressing him as Shah-i-Armen or Armenian shah. But we must impute to this sovereign a new division of authority, and a consequent reduction of the resisting powers of the Armenian nation in face of foreign aggression. By investing his brother Mushegh with royal prerogatives at Kars, he added yet another to the number of kinglets whose mutual jealousies prepared the way for the passage of the Seljuk Turks towards the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. His successor continued and even developed this baneful policy, adding to the kings of Kars the kings of Lori, in the mountains which border Armenia upon the north. This latter Bagratid dynasty struggled on into the thirteenth century; but the kings of Kars made over their realm to the Cæsar Constantine the Tenth after the capture of Ani by the Seljuks under Alp Arslan.

Ashot III., A.D. 951-977.

The reign of Ashot the Third is contemporary with the campaigns of Nikephorus Phokas and of John Zimiskes against the

[1] Matthew of Edessa (*op. cit.* iii. p. 2) gives the date as A.D. 959-960. He makes the event contemporary with the expedition of the imperial forces against Crete, which started in 960 and was continued during 961. Saint-Martin (*op. cit.* vol. i. p. 364) assigns the Armenian victory to the latter year, and Chamchean to the year 962.

Saracens. Throughout this period the Arab emirs of Syria and Mesopotamia are actively engaged in harassing the outposts of the great Christian empire, and are not less actively repulsed. The conceptions of the Crusaders are anticipated by these generals over a century before the arrival of the Western chivalry. Both successively ascended the throne of the Cæsars; and it was in the capacity of emperor of the Romans that Zimiskes, himself of Armenian descent, summoned the Armenian monarch to attach to his army a contingent of troops. His expedition appears to have excited the alarm of the Armenians; and the native levies had been marshalled to the proportions of a large army under the command of the three Armenian kinglets, Ashot, his colleague of Kars, and his colleague of Van. Zimiskes advanced into the territory of Mush; but an alliance was secured by the despatch of a body of 10,000 Armenian warriors to share in the victories which were about to secure the triumph of the imperial arms over the followers of the Prophet. These brilliant feats are narrated for the benefit of King Ashot in a despatch which was addressed to him by the emperor, and which has been preserved by Matthew of Edessa. The Armenian monarch is styled Shahinshah of Great Armenia, the spiritual son of the Cæsar (A.D. 974).[1]

The reign of this prince has a special interest for the traveller to Ani; for it is at this period that the city on the Arpa emerges from the condition of a mere fortress into the splendour of a royal residence and capital of a kingdom. Ashot the Third is known to have added both to the defences and to the public buildings of a town which had witnessed the ceremony of his coronation.[2] It was considerably enlarged by his son and successor, Sembat the Second, who built the outer wall in face of which I have brought my reader at the commencement of this chapter.[3] Sembat also laid the foundations of the cathedral, but died before it was completed.[4] The title which is assigned to this king by the Armenian historians dissembles with truly Oriental ingenuity the inherent weakness of the structure which supported his throne. He is styled the king of Armenian kings, Shahinshah-Armen. Sembat was succeeded by his brother Gagik the First,

Sembat II., A.D. 977-989.

Gagik I., A.D. 989-1019.[5]

[1] Matthew of Edessa, *op. cit.* pp. 14 *seq.*
[2] Vardan. See Brosset, *Ruines d'Ani*, St. Petersburg, 1860, p. 102.
[3] Samuel of Ani ap. Migne, *op. cit.* p. 721.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] These dates are taken from Chamchean. But the subject is not free from difficulty. See Prudhomme's note appended to his translation of Aristakes of Lastivert in the *Revue*

a prince who is described as at once victorious in the field and strenuous in the works of peace. His military qualities may have been displayed in a campaign against the Mussulmans under the emir of Azerbaijan, Mamlun. But the credit of the victory over this successor of the Afshins and the Yusufs belongs in the principal degree to an Armenian prince of the country of Akhaltsykh, David, who endeavoured, at the head of forces composed of Georgians and Armenians, to wrest from the Moslem yoke the fortresses in the south of Armenia, Melazkert, Akhlat, Arjish.[1] It is rather in the sphere of a patron of art that we may be able to remember Gagik. It was during his reign that the noble cathedral at Ani was brought to completion, largely at the expense and by the initiative of his queen.[2] He built another of the great churches which adorned his capital, that of the Illuminator on the side of the Valley of Flowers.[3] The monastery of Marmashen, near Alexandropol, was constructed at this period by one of the Armenian princes, Vahram.[4] Lastly, the seat of the patriarchate was removed to Ani from the neighbouring town of Arghina.[5]

Upon the death of King Gagik the eldest of his three sons ascended the ancestral throne. Rare natural intelligence belonged to John Sembat—the monarch is known under either name; but these mental qualities were perhaps clouded by an excessive corpulency. On the other hand, his brother Ashot displayed the union of physical symmetry to ardent courage and passion for war. The man of action chafed under the supremacy of the peaceable civilian; and no sooner was the natural heir in possession of his heritage than his ambitious brother broke into open revolt. A

John Sembat, A.D. 1020-1041.

Ashot IV., A.D. 1020-1040.[6]

de l'Orient for 1863-64, ch. ii. In general the Armenian historians have a profound contempt for precision in dates and accuracy in statement. Matthew of Edessa is perhaps the worst sinner in this respect.

[1] Matthew of Edessa, chs. xxii. and xxiii.; and Asoghik, iii. 38, quoted by Dulaurier.

[2] Samuel of Ani ap. Migne, *op. cit.* p. 723.

[3] Samuel of Ani (*ibid.*) and Asoghik.

[4] Samuel of Ani (*ibid.*).

[5] Samuel of Ani (*ibid.* p. 720) and Chamchean. According to Samuel of Ani, it was in A.D. 971 that the patriarch established the seat of his spiritual government at Arghina.

[6] I have taken the dates of the deaths of these two kings from Matthew of Edessa, who is precise upon the point (see chs. liii. and lvi.). Chamchean (vol. ii. p. 122) places the death of John Sembat in 1039, and makes him predecease his brother Ashot IV. Brosset and Saint-Martin adopt the date 1039, but refuse the next fence, over which the nimble compiler sails with ease, that of the later death of Ashot IV. Perhaps there is an error in the English translation of Chamchean. One ends by getting tired of playing with dates. Happily there is an inscription at Ani which, if rightly translated by the editor of Aristakes (*op. cit.* ch. x. note), establishes the fact that John Sembat was alive in 1041.

peace was at length concluded upon the terms that John should reign in Shirak, with the capital Ani, and Ashot over the remainder of his father's dominions.[1] This compact was observed at least so far that Ashot the Fourth was never permitted by his jealous colleague to enter the capital.[2] But the civil war loosened the bonds which attached the feudatories to their king, and the neighbouring states to a dynasty in its strength. The one partner was obliged to have recourse to the Cæsar Basil; and it was not without the assistance of a contingent of imperial troops that Ashot IV. imposed his rule upon his allotted territories. The other was defeated at the commencement of his reign by the Bagratid king of Abkhasia and Georgia, whose troops entered and pillaged Ani.[3] These events appear to have been followed by a period of comparative tranquillity, during which either monarch was enabled to recover breath. But the Mussulman emirs were encroaching; the Seljuk Turks were harrying the frontiers; and the Armenian nation, the natural bulwark against their invasions, was distracted by the separate counsels of the king with Ani and the king without Ani, of the king of Lori and the king of Kars. The king of Van, upon whom the brunt of the Mussulman and Turkish incursions had fallen, was preparing or had already accomplished the cession of his kingdom to the Cæsar, in despair of withstanding these unceasing assaults.

The tribes composing the wave of the great Turkish invasion appear upon the stage of Armenian history as early as the commencement of the eleventh century.[4] The aspect and dress of these savages were as unfamiliar to the Armenians as their mode of conducting war. The Christian warriors, armed with the sword, encountered swarms of archers whose long hair floated behind them like that of women.[5] The signal defeat of his son David by these nomads about the year 1018 caused the reigning king of the Van

[1] Aristakes of Lastivert (*op. cit.* ii. pp. 358 *seq.*) and Matthew of Edessa (*op. cit.* viii. p. 6).

[2] Matthew of Edessa, *op. cit.* x. p. 8.

[3] Matthew of Edessa and Aristakes of Lastivert.

[4] When Senekerim of Van ceded his kingdom in A.D. 1021 it had been harried for twenty-two years. Such is the statement of Samuel of Ani (*op. cit.* p. 723). It is true he attributes these incursions to the "Saracens"; but he must mean the Turks, unless we are to discredit altogether the detailed statement of Matthew of Edessa (ch. xxxviii.), that it was a horde of Turks that defeated the forces of Senekerim. I shall not attempt to reconcile the Armenian accounts with the information which we have received from other sources concerning the early incursions of the Seljuks. The Byzantine writers do not appear to mention the invasions of 1021 and preceding years, or the invasion of 1042 (Brosset ap. Lebeau, *Hist. du Bas Empire*, vol. xiv. p. 353).

[5] Matthew of Edessa and Aristakes of Lastivert.

country to lose heart. The news was brought to him while he was residing in the delicious town of Vostan, upon the wooded spurs of the Kurdish mountains overlooking the lake of Van. His despondency was confirmed by the recollection of a prophecy in which St. Nerses, the fifth successor of St. Gregory, had foretold the advent of great calamities at the hands of a barbarous people a thousand years after the divine mission of Christ. Senekerim despatched his son to the court of Constantinople, where he was received with the greatest kindness by the Emperor Basil II. The Cæsar accepted the gift of his extensive and populous realm, and gave in exchange a secure retreat within the borders of the Empire, the city and territory of Sivas (A.D. 1021). An imperial governor was sent to take over the ceded dominions, in which were included no less than 72 fortresses, 4000 villages, and 8 towns.[1] Some display of force was necessary in order to fasten upon the southern province the rule of the Byzantine monarchs; and it is probable that the measures taken to assert their authority still further enfeebled the rampart they had come to defend. The progress of the shepherds may be traced through the pages of the Armenian historians during the ensuing years. In A.D. 1021 they advanced from Azerbaijan upon the town of Nakhichevan under the conduct of their prince, the famous Toghrul Bey. This incursion was directed up the valley of the Araxes into the country about Ararat. It was resisted by a force of Georgians, who retired without coming to an engagement, and, a little later, by a small detachment of the Armenian army under Vasak, the commander-in-chief. But no concerted action was taken against the invaders, the Armenians contenting themselves with deeds of personal prowess, and the Turkomans swarming over the settled country, plundering, destroying, and putting the inhabitants to the sword.[2] In the year 1042 they were encountered by the king of Armenia, Gagik, the successor of John Sembat and Ashot. At the head of his troops he inflicted upon them a signal defeat on the banks of the Zanga, the river of Erivan. The Turks retired into the Van country, which they devastated anew.[3] Three years

[1] Samuel of Ani, Thomas Artsruni (quoted by Dulaurier, *Recherches sur la Chronologie Arménienne*, pp. 282 *seq.*), and Chamchean. I prefer to translate *oppida* by villages and *urbes* by towns in the Latin version of Samuel of Ani, feeling sure that these terms, as understood in modern times, will be more in accordance with the facts.

[2] Vardan (quoted by Dulaurier, notes to Matthew of Edessa, *op. cit.* p. 378), and Matthew of Edessa, ch. xi. If Toghrul Bey was over seventy years old when he died in A.H. 455, he would be in the flower of his age at the time of this expedition.

[3] Matthew of Edessa, ch. lx. p. 71; and Chamchean, vol. ii. pp. 127 *seq.*

later they appeared again in the same province; but this time they were fugitives from Mesopotamia, where they had been repulsed by the emir of Mosul. Their prayer for a safe passage home into Persia was refused by the imperial governor residing at Arjish, on the lake of Van. But the forces at his disposal were routed by the tribesmen, who took him prisoner and put him to death.[1] The Turks returned in greater numbers during the following years, laying waste the southern province, flooding northwards into Pasin and into the valley of the Chorokh. To this period belong the sack of Arzen (near Erzerum) in 1049, and the pillage of Kars and massacre of its inhabitants in 1050. Neither the imperial generals nor their Georgian and Armenian dependents were successful in making headway against the storm.[2] The year 1054 was made memorable in the native annals by the siege of Melazkert. Toghrul had arrived at the head of an immense army in the districts bordering the lake of Van on the side of Azerbaijan. The town of Berkri was taken by assault, that of Arjish purchased immunity; and the conqueror led his host across the level country at the foot of Sipan to the walls of the fortress on the Murad. Melazkert was at that time in the possession of the Empire, and was stoutly defended by its governor. After a close investiture, during which the garrison displayed great resource and bravery, the Seljuk king was constrained to retire. But he had already despatched detachments of his army in all directions; the Turks penetrated as far north as the slopes of Caucasus and the Pontic forests, and as far south as the mountains bordering the southern shore of Lake Van.[3] The area of their raids was still further extended during the subsequent decade. The territory of Mush was overrun in 1058; and the lonely cloister of Surb Karapet, which overlooks that extensive plain, witnessed the prowess of the Armenian chiefs, who directed their gaze towards it before falling upon their savage foes.[4] These bands had perhaps returned from the sack of Malatia beyond and

[1] Matthew of Edessa, ch. lxix. p. 80. See also Lebeau, *op. cit.* vol. xiv. p. 351.

[2] The campaigns of this period are narrated by Matthew of Edessa (ch. lxxiii. pp. 83 *seq.*) and Aristakes (*op. cit.* pp. 268-82 and p. 285), as well as by the Greek and Arab historians. The subject is discussed by Saint-Martin (*Mémoires*, vol. ii. pp. 201 *seq.*).

[3] Matthew of Edessa, ch. lxxviii. pp. 98 *seq.*, and Aristakes, *op. cit.* 1863, ch. xvi. p. 289. Melazkert owed its deliverance largely to the intrepidity of a Frankish adventurer. It did not fall to the Turks until A.D. 1069, when it was taken after a siege of a single day by Alp Arslan (Matthew of Edessa, ch. cii.).

[4] Matthew of Edessa, ch. lxxxi. p. 109.

on the west of the Euphrates.[1] In the following year the advancing tide reached the city of Sivas, that peaceful haven in the interior of Asia Minor which had been allotted to King Senekerim, and which was now in possession of his sons. These princes fled for their life, and the Turks were for a moment arrested by the spectacle of the multitude of white domes, belonging to the churches, which they mistook for the tents of their enemy. But both the city and the plain of Sivas were given over to pillage and massacre; streets and countryside were deluged with blood.[2] North, south, and west spread the relentless inundation; at one time the current sets towards the territory of Karin (Erzerum), at another it eddies around the mountains in the south between Diarbekr and Palu.[3]

Armenian patriots of the present day brand the memory of King Senekerim, the Artsrunian, and insult his tomb in the cloister of Varag, overlooking Van. No more lenient judgment is meted out to the Bagratid king of Ani, who, as early as the year 1022, willed away his dominions to the same Cæsar who had supplanted the sovereign of the southern province. But these events are but the outward signs of a general retreat of the Armenians before the advance of Turks and Kurds, battering in the gates of the caliphate and pressing forward into the settled countries.[4] A fairer view might impute it to these Christian kinglets that they failed to stand their ground upon the bulwarks of Eastern Christendom, drawing support from their powerful neighbours of the same faith, who were welded together in a single and magnificent empire. But that empire, so justly respected by the Mussulmans as the realm of the Romans, was an object of particular aversion to the Armenians as the home or the prey of the hated and unorthodox Greeks. On every page of Armenian history is written large the mutual suspicion which envenomed the relations of the two races. Where co-operation might have seemed impossible we may perhaps excuse the abdication of the weaker party, and even justify the usurpation of the stronger. And the judicial historian, who may sift the facts with greater care than the

1 *Ibid.* pp. 107, 108, and Aristakes, *op. cit.* 1864, ch. xxi.

2 Matthew of Edessa, ch. lxxxiv. pp. 111 *seq.*

3 See Aristakes, ch. xviii., and Matthew of Edessa, ch. lxxxvi.

4 We are informed in the History of Thomas Artsruni that Senekerim and the Artsrunian princes were accompanied in their emigration by a population of 14,000 males, besides women and children. See Dulaurier, *Recherches*, etc., p. 284. Chamchean (vol. ii. p. 113) increases this estimate to 400,000 souls, I know not upon what authority.

inquisitive traveller, will perhaps conclude that the blame must be laid on wider shoulders—upon the Pan-Greek policy of the Byzantine Cæsars and their masterful hierarchy, and upon the perversity of two cultured and Christian peoples, who, rather than compose or postpone their quarrels, threw this culture and this religion into the maw of savages.

At the time when the Bagratid kingdom of Armenia was suffering from a fresh division of the regal authority under John Sembat and Ashot, the neighbouring Empire was administered by a worthy successor of Nikephorus and of Zimiskes. The Emperor Basil the Second stands out in the Byzantine annals as a monarch who did not disgrace the title of the Roman Cæsars. His personal intervention in the affairs of Armenia dates from the reign of Gagik the First, and was occasioned by the death of the prince of the Akhaltsykh country, David, who had during his lifetime been a fast ally of the emperor, and who had named him heir to his principality. Basil hurried to Armenia to take over his new possessions; he was greeted by the kings of Kars and of Van; but King Gagik excited his displeasure and provoked his resentment by somewhat pointedly remaining away. The Cæsar appears to have made a peregrination of the Armenian country, visiting Shirak, and perhaps occupying some of the fortresses in the south, such as Akhlat, Melazkert, and Arjish.[1] Years later he was again summoned to the scene of his former successes; but on this occasion it was his duty to combat the folly of two Christian princes who had taken up arms against that Empire which alone could save them from their doom. King George the First of Georgia, in concert with King John Sembat of Ani, had been raiding in the imperial dominions. Basil established his camp in the plain of Erzerum, and summoned the Georgian monarch to submit. Upon the failure of his embassies he made his way by the plain of Pasin to the territory of Kars. The armies came together in the neighbourhood of Lake Chaldir; and if the issue of a furious engagement may have seemed uncertain, the result was established by the retirement of the Georgians into their strong places, and by the devastation of their country by the imperial forces, which included

[1] Chamchean, vol. ii. p. 104; Saint-Martin, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 366; Brosset ap. Lebeau, vol. xiv. pp. 184 *seq.* Chamchean and Saint-Martin place this expedition in A.D. 999, Lebeau in 991, while Aristakes assigns it to the year 1001. The latter attributes the capture of Arjish to Nikephorus, the Greek governor of Vaspurakan appointed by Basil.

contingents of barbarous peoples such as Russians and Bulgarians. The emperor spent the winter in the neighbourhood of Trebizond, where he received an envoy from the king of Ani, no less a person than the patriarch, accompanied by twelve bishops, seventy monks, two scholars, and three hundred knights. The presence no less than the gifts of this distinguished embassy might have appeased the just wrath of the most Christian emperor; but his expectations were perhaps exceeded by the production of a testament in which John Sembat named him the heir to his dominions. This voluntary cession (A.D. 1022) secured the immunity of the kingdom of Ani; and Basil was free to exact his terms from the Georgian. Measures were taken to ensure the future safety of the domains of Akhaltsykh, and the imperial army was paraded upon the extremities of the Armenian country, carrying fear into the hearts of the inhabitants of Azerbaijan. Basil returned to his distant capital, having smoothed the way for the extension of the Empire across the natural bridge of the Asiatic highlands. The masters of Akhaltsykh in the north and of Van in the south could afford to wait for the death of a feeble and childless king.[1]

But the Emperor Basil died in the year 1025, and was followed upon the throne by no less than six sovereigns within the space of seventeen years. His bold policy was committed to feeble hands and incapable brains; and perhaps the testament of King John was forgotten by the Emperor Romanus when he bestowed his niece in marriage upon its author.[2] The bridegroom did not profit by this opportunity of producing an heir who might have rivalled the claims of the heir of Basil. Upon the death of John, which occurred some years after this event, the reigning emperor, Michael, took steps to enforce those claims. One of the most powerful of the Armenian nobles, by name Sargis, supported the cession of the kingdom in accordance with the imperial demand. His proposal was resisted by his compeers, and the imperial forces were despatched into Shirak. Arrived under the walls of Ani, they were surprised by a sally of the garrison, who were led by the chiefs of the faction opposed to

[1] Aristakes in *op. cit.* ch. ii., together with the authorities collected in the accompanying notes by M. Prudhomme. Chamchean attributes the cession of the kingdom of Ani to the terror which had been inspired by the Seljuk invasions. Basil's policy of taking over the hereditary possessions of the Armenian and Georgian princes and giving them seats in other parts of the Empire was continued by his brother Constantine. See Aristakes, *op. cit.*, third series, vol. xvi. pp. 51 *seq.*

[2] Samuel of Ani, *op. cit.* p. 723; and Lebeau, vol. xiv. p. 249. Aristakes is our authority for a curious story respecting the adventures of this testament (ch. x.).

Sargis, under the supreme command of the intrepid Vahram (A.D. 1041). The Greek army was routed after incurring heavy losses, and the river of Ani was reddened by the blood of the Greeks. Gagik, the son of King Ashot, who was then a mere youth, was raised to his uncle's throne; and the hateful Sargis was taken prisoner by the successful party, but restored to liberty by the clemency of the young king. The imperial anger continued to harass an inexperienced prince who was regarded by the Byzantine court as an usurper; but the death of Michael in the same year suspended the delivery of a decisive blow. His nephew, another Michael, ruled or tyrannised for a few months; the disorders of his reign were followed by those consequent upon his expulsion; and a short period was perhaps necessary for his successor, Constantine Monomachus, to establish himself upon the throne. The revenge which he inherited against the kingdom of Ani was stimulated by the intrigues of Sargis, who suggested that the youthful Gagik should be enticed to Constantinople, in order to smooth the way for the surrender of the city. The promises of the emperor, and the oaths of the nobles that they would conserve his capital during his absence, were successful in drawing the monarch away; but a considerable display of force was rendered necessary before the garrison could be induced to surrender Ani. After a first reverse, measures were taken by the absent emperor to secure the triumph of his arms. A Kurdish emir, who was powerful in Karabagh and the valley of the Araxes, was induced to join his forces to those of the Empire; and matters had become hopeless when the city was delivered over to the emissary of the Cæsar by the notables in concert with the patriarch (A.D. 1045). King Gagik was allotted a territory in Cappadocia and a palace at Constantinople. A Greek governor was despatched to take over Ani and the new possessions, which placed the crown upon the extension of the *Roman* Empire along the valley of the Araxes and round the shores of Lake Van.[1]

Gagik II., A.D. 1042-45.

In this manner and by these several stages the protagonists in a world struggle were brought face to face. The Seljuks reinforced the failing energies of Islam, but infused into the body to which they lent new vigour an intractable strain of barbarism

[1] Samuel of Ani; Matthew of Edessa; Aristakes; Kedrenus. The Byzantine historians omit the campaign of 1041, and maintain silence upon the disagreeable topic of the deception practised upon King Gagik.

which it has retained to the present day. On the high-road of their depredations they were now confronted by a redoubtable adversary, the champion of Christianity and of whatever culture the age possessed. But that religion, become debased, had already sapped the foundations of culture; the winged mind of the Greeks had been imprisoned by a rigorous dogmatism; and their bodies were either crushed by the discipline of the monastery or exhausted by the refinements of the life of sensual pleasure. The greatness of their inheritance and the extent of the resources which they administered had been equal to producing a Nikephorus, a Zimiskes and a Basil; but this grain of Roman genius was allowed to wither by the succeeding princes; and we feel the force of the comparison which is drawn by the Armenian historian between the quiet strength and benignant policy of Basil and the dissolute habits and feeble half-measures of Monomachus.[1] The safety of the provinces was made subordinate to the interests of the Greek hierarchy; the Armenians were irritated by renewed attempts to bring them over to Byzantine orthodoxy; and their resistance was punished by the removal of the strongest characters from the native seats in the defence of which they would have given their lives. The new territories were handed over to Greek eunuchs, to whom was entrusted their administration and defence.[2] In the year 1055 the inhabitants were massacred outside the walls of Ani by an enemy which perhaps consisted of a detachment of Seljuks in concert with the forces of the emir of Karabagh.[3] The final blow was delivered nine years later by the successor of Toghrul, the famous Alp Arslan. After a successful campaign in the Georgian country he arrived before Ani in the summer of 1064. The appearance of the city at that date is described in eloquent terms, if with some exaggeration, by Matthew of Edessa. Such was the number of the population assembled within its ramparts that the Turks believed them to comprise the greater part of the Armenian nation. Mass was celebrated in a thousand and one churches. Precipitous cliffs protected the site for almost the whole circuit, and it was embraced by the sinuous course of the Arpa Chai. On one side only was there level or slightly shelving ground for a distance about equal to the flight of an arrow. It was upon the walls which defended this vulnerable side that the Seljuk sultan directed his attack.

[1] Aristakes, ch. xvii.
[2] Matthew of Edessa, chs. lxxxiv. and lxxxv.
[3] Aristakes, ch. xvii.

After a siege of twenty-five days the Turks penetrated into the city. Each man carried a knife in either hand and a third between his teeth. The garrison had retired into the inner citadel, and the defenceless inhabitants were mown down like grass. One of the barbarians mounted upon the roof of the cathedral, and hurled to the ground the great cross which rose from the dome. A little door gave him access to the interior of the dome, whence he precipitated a crystal lamp, perhaps of Indian origin, which had been presented by King Sembat the Second. The capture of Ani prepared the way for the investiture of Kars; but the king of Kars appeased the victor by attiring himself in black robes, which he affected to be wearing out of respect for the death of Toghrul. From these successes the Seljuks were carried forward into the bosom of the Empire; and the signal defeat near Melazkert of the Cæsar Romanus in 1071 finally decided the long struggle in favour of the Mohammedan world.[1]

From these momentous issues, with which the fortunes of Ani were so closely connected, it is an abrupt descent to the plane of her subsequent history. I have already had occasion to mention the two chief actors in this minor drama, the Bagratid dynasty of Georgia and the Kurdish dynasty of Karabagh.[2] The Georgian Bagratids weathered the storm of the Seljuk invasions; and they attained during the course of the twelfth and the commencement of the thirteenth century a wide dominion over the adjacent lands. A lesser station must be assigned to the Mussulman family of the Beni-Cheddad, who in the decline of the caliphate had established themselves in the valleys of the Kur and the Araxes, and whose kinsmen probably wandered over the mountains of Karabagh, which at the present day still harbour Kurdish tribes. The particular clan to which they belonged is said to have been named Rewadi; but they became possessed of the important town of Gandzak in the valley of the Kur (the modern Elizabetpol), and of Dvin, the ancient Armenian metropolis, in that of the Araxes. I have twice spoken of their prince, a figure of some importance during the reigns of John Sembat and Gagik the Second, at first the ally and then the determined adversary of the Empire and the coadjutor of Alp Arslan. Abulsevar—the Chawir of the Arabs, the Aplesphares of the Greeks—is well known to the

[1] Matthew of Edessa; Samuel of Ani; Aristakes. The king of Kars gave over his realm to the Empire shortly after the fall of Ani, taking in exchange the fortress of Tsamentav near Amasia in Asia Minor (Matthew of Edessa, ch. lxxxviii.).

[2] Pp. 337 and 362.

Byzantine annalists, and is styled by them, no less than by the Armenian writers, the prince of Dvin.[1] His son and successor, Fathlun, purchased Ani from the Seljuk sultan, and gave it over to his brother Manuchar (A.D. 1072). This ruler appears to have governed with moderation; and he was confirmed in his dignity by the successor of Alp Arslan, the humane Malek Shah, who extended the Seljuk empire to the Mediterranean. After the death of Manuchar in A.D. 1110[2] the inhabitants were much harassed by their Mussulman and Georgian neighbours during the government of his son and successor, another Abulsevar. They appealed for help to the Bagratid king of Georgia, David the Second, and opened their gates to that monarch (A.D. 1124). Abulsevar and his sons were carried off to Tiflis, and the unhappy prince, with two of his children, perished in an unhealthy prison.[3] This revolution restored the city to a Christian administration, after a Mussulman occupation of sixty years. The cathedral, which had served as a mosque, was restored to Christian worship and consecrated anew with great pomp. But David the Second died in the following year; and his son and successor Dimitri was confronted with an investiture of Ani by Fathlun, the eldest son of the deceased ruler, who had been absent at the time of the Georgian conquest and who was thirsting to avenge his father. The issue of a lengthy siege was a happy compromise, by which the Kurdish emir assumed the government under a pledge to reserve the cathedral to the exclusive use of his Armenian subjects (A.D. 1125-26).[4] Fathlun was killed in battle in the year 1132, and was succeeded by his brother Mahmud.[5] The Kurdish dynasty continued to drag on a precarious existence as lords of Ani until towards the close of the twelfth century; but they lost Gandzak to the Seljuks in 1088, and Dvin to the Georgians in 1162.[6] The conqueror of Dvin, George the Third, was twice the conqueror of Ani. His first expedition belongs to the year 1161,

[1] Kedrenus calls him ruler of Tibion (=Tivin or Dvin) and parts of Persarmenia about the river Araxes (edit. Bekker, vol. ii. pp. 556 *seq.*). See Matthew of Edessa (ch. x. with Dulaurier's note, and ch. cii. p. 165) and Aristakes (ch. x.). For the Beni-Cheddad see Saint-Martin (*Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 433; ii. p. 235) and Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 114 and 126, and *Hist. de la Géorgie, Hist. ancienne*, p. 343). Abulsevar marched with Alp Arslan in 1069 against the Empire (Matthew of Edessa, ch. cii.). His activity therefore ranges over a considerable period.

[2] Samuel of Ani.

[3] Samuel of Ani; Matthew of Edessa; the Georgian annalist, quoted by Brosset (*Hist. de la Géorgie*, p. 369).

[4] Samuel of Ani and Matthew of Edessa.

[5] Samuel of Ani.

[6] Samuel of Ani and Matthew of Edessa.

when he made himself master of the place after a single day's siege.[1] But his success exasperated his Mussulman neighbours, and he was confronted in the same year by the emir of Akhlat at the head of an army numbering 80,000 men. The pompous title of this prince, that of Shah of Armenia, serves to accentuate his signal defeat by the Georgian king. But the Mussulmans renewed their attacks under the guidance or at the prompting of Ildigiz, the Atabeg governor of Azerbaijan. About the year 1165 George was constrained to restore Ani to them, and it again came into the possession of the Beni-Cheddad. From these it passed for the third time into the hands of the Georgians in 1173-74.[2] During the reign of Thamar the luckless inhabitants were surprised and massacred by the emir of Ardabil in eastern Azerbaijan. Even at that period, the commencement of the thirteenth century, the city was still rich and populous.[3] But the advent of the Tartars in A.D. 1239 was the occasion of a new catastrophe, the place being sacked by the savage bands of Jenghiz Khan. In 1319 Ani was visited by a severe earthquake, to which Armenian writers ascribe her final abandonment. But there exists evidence to show that this consummation was deferred to a later and uncertain date.

I feel that I owe an apology to my reader for this long excursion into Armenian history. But my endeavour has been to encompass a double purpose, that of presenting in a sufficient narrative the capital events in the annals of Ani, and that of sketching in from various and scattered sources the larger history of the Armenian kingdom of the Middle Ages. The attention of the traveller, no less than that of the statesman and the man of culture, is frequently directed to that neglected but fascinating subject, which indeed explains the present condition of the Armenians and which conducts us to the threshold of our own era. We cannot learn much from the long intervening spaces of time during which Tartars and Turkomans, and Ottoman Turks and Persians ruled in a country which was forgotten by the West. A deep sleep settles on the land, given over to shepherds, from which it scarcely awakes at the distant calling of the modern epoch. The natural development of the Armenian people was

[1] Samuel of Ani; the continuation of Matthew of Edessa; the Georgian annalist in Brosset (*Hist. de la Géorgie*).

[2] Brosset, *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 131, and *Voyage Archéologique*, livraison 1, rapport 1, p. 94.

[3] The Georgian annalist, ap. Brosset, *Hist. de la Géorgie*.

suddenly arrested by the Seljuk conquest, and the abler among them were forced to seek new homes. Some stout spirits established themselves in the mountains of Cilicia, where they founded a petty kingdom which endured for nearly three hundred years (A.D. 1080-1375). The obstinacy of their race was made manifest by the long resistance of this colony to the spiritual guidance of the popes of Rome. The friends of the Crusaders, they were at length overwhelmed by the Turks, who suppressed the dynasty. Their descendants still maintain themselves about their adopted seats, secure in their mountain fastnesses. But perhaps the most remarkable outcome of this dispersal was the emigration of the inhabitants of Ani to Poland, Moldavia and Galicia, to Astrakhan on the northern shore of the Caspian, and thence to the Crimea. Many of these colonies have endured to the present day. Some among them were permitted to retain their own laws; and the jurisprudence of the Armenian kings figures in the code of the colony of Lemberg, which was administered by the Armenian notables with the express sanction of the Polish kings and which has been preserved to the curiosity of our own age.[1]

My reader is now in possession of an outline of the history of the deserted city before the walls of which he stands. He is also familiar with the large surroundings which overpower this elegant architecture—in the distance the pile of Alagöz and the dome of Ararat; far and near the undulating upland plain, deeply cañoned by the sinuous course of the Arpa Chai. But the site of Ani calls for some particular description.[2] It has

[1] The various emigrations of the inhabitants of Ani are exhibited by Minas Bejeshkean (*Travels in Lehastan* (Poland) *and other Countries inhabited by Armenian Emigrants from Ani*, Venice, 1830 (in Armenian)). His account is summarised by Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 138 *seq.*) and by Ritter (*Erdkunde*, vol. x. pp. 597 *seq.*). For the code of the Armenians of Lemberg see *Sitzungsberichte der phil.-hist. Klasse der k. Akad. der Wissenschaften*, Vienna, 1862, pp. 255 *seq.*

[2] Let me catalogue in this place the works of previous travellers having reference to Ani which I have collected. I shall annex the date of visit whenever I have been able to ascertain it. I have purposely omitted works written in Russian or in Armenian. The full titles will be found in the bibliography attached to Vol. II.

(1) 1621, Poser (*Reyse*, etc., Jena, 1675, 4°). His account is confined to a few sentences. He mentions the existence of 200 churches in Ani and the immediate neighbourhood. (2) Tavernier (edit. Paris, 1679, *Livre Premier*, p. 24). A few misleading sentences. (3) 1817, Ker Porter (*Travels in Georgia*, etc., London, 1821-22, vol. i. pp. 169 *seq.*). A fantastic description. (4) 1836, Hamilton (*Researches in Asia Minor*, etc., London, 1842, vol. i. pp. 197 *seq.*). The best of these older notices. (5) 1837, Wilbraham (*Travels*, etc., London, 1839, pp. 187 *seq.*). The hasty but vivid impressions of a tourist, from which the following is an extract: "The shapeless

been built within the fork described by the meeting of two ravines which have been eroded by the action of water to a considerable depth below the level of the plain. In the more westerly of these ravines flows a small stream coming down from the Alaja Dagh (p. 330), which was known to the old priest by its older name of Tsaghkotz,[1] but which some travellers have called the Alaja Chai. The more easterly is occupied by the Arpa Chai, the ancient Akhurean. Near the confluence, the two streams are only separated by a narrow spit, and their waters hiss at the base of crags composed of lava. But the greater portion of the site consists of a spacious platform, flanked on two sides by the ravines. At a distance of about a mile above the junction of the waters two small side valleys descend into the principal

mounds of Babylon are like the skeleton"; but the deserted, yet still standing city (Ani) resembles the corpse whose breath has fled, but which still retains the semblance of life." (6) 1837, Abbott (*Notes of a Tour*, *Journal R.G.S.*, 1842, vol. xii. pp. 215 *seq.*). Not important. (7) 1838, Eugène Boré (*Corr. et Mém.*, Paris, 1840, vol. ii. p. 2) mentions a *mémoire* in which he was about to resume the results of his seven days' sojourn in Ani, during which he copied inscriptions. The *mémoire* has been lost. (8) 1839, Texier (*Description de l'Arménie*, etc., Paris, 1842, folio, pp. 93-116), with a plan, which is not oriented, and ten fine plates. Texier's account is both defective and unsatisfactory; but it is the first detailed description. I must warn my reader against accepting his history; he seems to confuse Timur with Alp Arslan in some places. (9) 1844, Herrmann Abich (*Bull. hist.-phil. de l'Acad. de Sciences de St. Pétersbourg*, 1845, vol. ii. pp. 369-76, with notice by Brosset; *Aus kaukasischen Ländern, Reisebriefe*, Vienna, 1896, pp. 176-200). The distinguished geologist devoted four days to the study of the ruins and drew out a plan of the site. His full account, for which consult the latter of the two references, had not been published, so far as I could ascertain, at the time of my own journey. But Brosset had already published the plan, the substantial accuracy of which I was able to test upon the spot (*Voyage Archéologique*, St. Petersburg, 1849-51, Atlas), and the inscriptions copied by Abich (in the same work, livr. 1, rapp. 3, pp. 86-111). (10) 1846, Muravieff, quoted by Khanikoff ap. Brosset (*Voy. Arch.* livr. 1, rapp. 3, pp. 121-52). (11) 1847, Nerses Sargisean of the Society of the Mekhitarists of Venice copied a number of the inscriptions. See Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, St. Petersburg, 1860, p. 5), and especially Brosset's article in the *Bull. Acad. Sciences St. P.*, 1862, vol. iv. pp. 255-67. (12) 1848, Khanikoff copied the Mussulman inscriptions. See Brosset (*Voy. Arch.* livr. 1, rapp. 3, pp. 121-52). (13) 1850, Kästner (Lieut. Julius) was commissioned by Prince Vorontsoff, Governor of the Caucasus, to explore Ani, and spent forty-four days within its walls. He collected fifty inscriptions and made numerous drawings, which have been made use of by Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 4 *seq.*). (14) 18—, Ussher (*Journey from London to Persepolis*, London, 1865, pp. 243-45). A sketchy description.

The whole subject has been fully treated, but unfortunately at second hand, by Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, St. Pet. 1860, and *Bull. Acad. Sciences St. P.*, 1862, vol. iv. pp. 255-67). The traveller is deeply indebted to Brosset for these two valuable treatises. Fergusson has devoted a few pages to Ani in the first volume of his *History of Architecture* (see pp. 473-75).

I ought not to close this list without referring to two works in Armenian which are of special value: Sargis Dgalaleantz (*Journey in Great Armenia*, Tiflis, 1842 and 1858, 8vo), and Alishan (*Description of Great Armenia*, Venice, 1855). Both these works contain accounts of Ani.

[1] This ravine is the Armenian Tsaghkotzadzor or Valley of the Flower-garden.

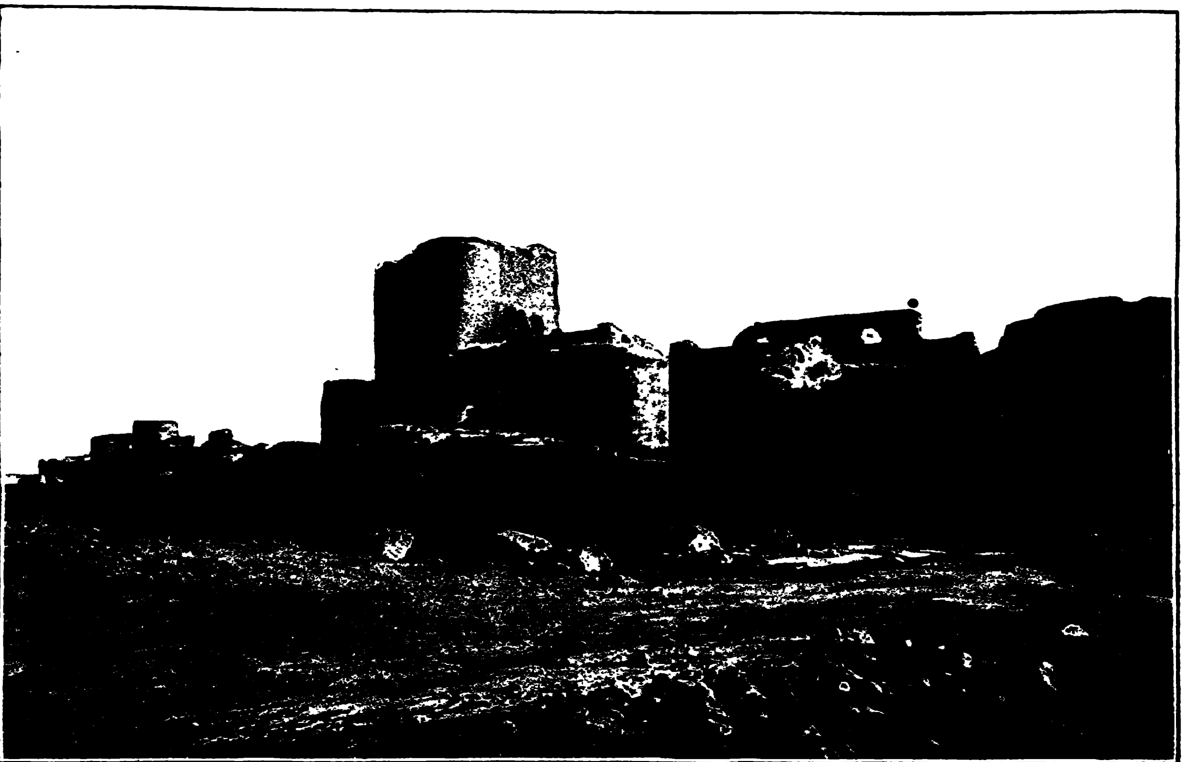


FIG. 70. WALLS AND GATEWAY OF THE CITY OF ANI FROM OUTSIDE, LOOKING EAST.

depressions from within the area which they enclose. The one is directed towards the west and joins the trough of the Alaja; the other pursues a south-easterly course to the chasm of the Arpa Chai. The heads of these two side valleys are separated from one another by a considerable stretch of unbroken ground. It is on that side only and along that space that the site is weak. And it is there that the double line of walls have been erected, fronted in ancient times by a moat (Fig. 70).[1]

The character of this double wall and the appearance of the towers



FIG. 71. ANI: BAS-RELIEF ON THE INNER WALL OF THE GATEWAY.

are exhibited in my illustration, which was taken from outside, in front of the principal gateway. The long line of fortifications is seen extending towards the east. Such walls are composed at Ani of an inner core of solid conglomerate, faced on either side with rectangular blocks of hewn stone. One admires the exquisite art with which the masonry is disposed and the minute fitting at the joints. We enter the enclosure between the two parapets, and walk for a short distance in an easterly direction. Above us, upon the face of the inner wall, is placed a fine bas-relief of a lion (Fig. 71); and almost immediately we arrive at the inner gateway, just west of the great tower. A somewhat effaced inscription is seen above the arch. It has been copied, but the interpretation

[1] The moat may have united the waters of the Alaja and the Arpa Chai. See *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 60.

and date are obscure.[1] We know that these walls were originally built by King Sembat the Second (A.D. 977-989);[2] but they must have been restored and towers added at later dates. The earliest inscription which has been discovered was found on a round tower not far from this entrance. It is in Cufic character, and records that the tower was erected by Manuchar the son of Chawir, or Abulsevar. We have already seen that Manuchar was the first ruler in Ani of the Kurdish family of the Beni-Cheddad (A.D. 1072). Other inscriptions belong to the latter half of the twelfth century and the commencement of the thirteenth. They are in Armenian and establish the fact that some of the towers were constructed by private persons as memorials to themselves.[3]

Once within the archway through the inner wall, the interior of the city is displayed in a long perspective to our gaze. But we might have to mount upon one of the parapets, in order to survey the irregularities of the large triangular space as far as the citadel at its further and narrow end. This north-easterly or broader portion of the site is covered with the débris of the private dwellings, not one of which has remained erect. They must have been packed together in a most uncomfortable manner, and they were probably built for the greater part of inferior material.[4] It is as though a Persian runner had swished them away with his long cane to open the view to the noble monuments which still stand. Behind us, as we proceed, the long barrier of the fortifications opens out on either side. The inner walls of many of the towers have fallen in, and their vaulted interiors are laid bare. They suggest the appearance of a series of apses as they soar up into the sky.

Directing our steps towards the cathedral, the largest of the buildings, we pass the scattered fragments of an **octagonal tower** (No. 11 on the plan), which must have succumbed at a comparatively recent date. It has been seen while still perfect by my predecessors, who have described it as a minaret. It may have also served as a watch-tower. One huge block of masonry which has held together still displays the large proportions and the form of the structure. The remains of a spiral staircase engage the eye, and one is impressed with the excellence of the masonry.

[1] See Brosset, *Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 18 and 144. It may belong to the Tartar period (Mongol) and have reference to the restoration of Ani after the earthquake of A.D. 1319. Texier (*op. cit.* p. 94) commits himself to the statement that it is in Arabic characters; but see Khanikoff, *op. cit.* p. 135.

[2] On the authority of Samuel of Ani. See *supra*, p. 354.

[3] See Brosset, *Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 16, 17, 58, 59; and *Voyage Arch.*, livr. 1, rapp. 3, p. 143. One of these inscriptions indicates that the name of the reigning prince of the Beni-Cheddad in A.D. 1160, just before the Georgian conquest, was Phatl (Fathlun). Several belong to the reign of Thamar, and exhibit the name of the Georgian ruler, Zakare-Shahanshah, who is styled "chief of the mandatories" and son of Sarkis Shahanshah. See Brosset (*Voyage Arch.*, livr. 1, rapp. 1, pp. 92-94, and *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 18) for an explanation of this title. Two of these inscriptions of Zakare belong to the years 1206 and 1215 respectively.

[4] Ani is said to have contained not less than 100,000 inhabitants in the eleventh century. Yet the circumference of the city has been estimated at not more than 3½ miles. I am inclined to think that a large proportion of the population lived without the walls.

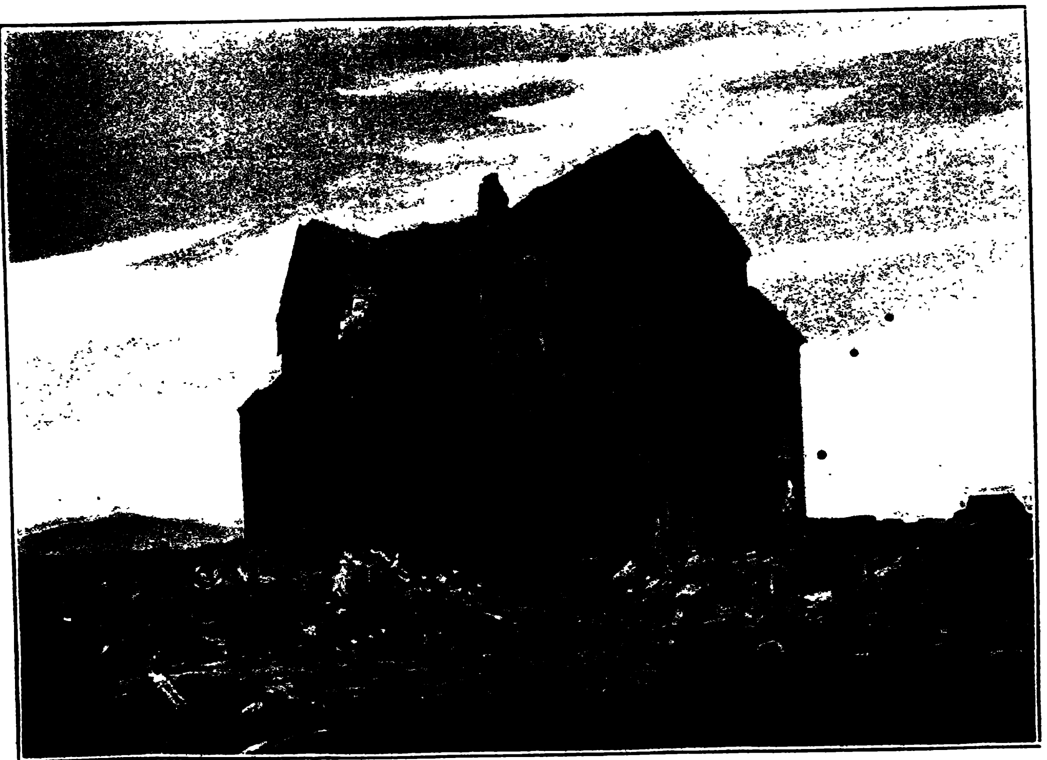


Fig. 72. Ani: The Cathedral from South-East.

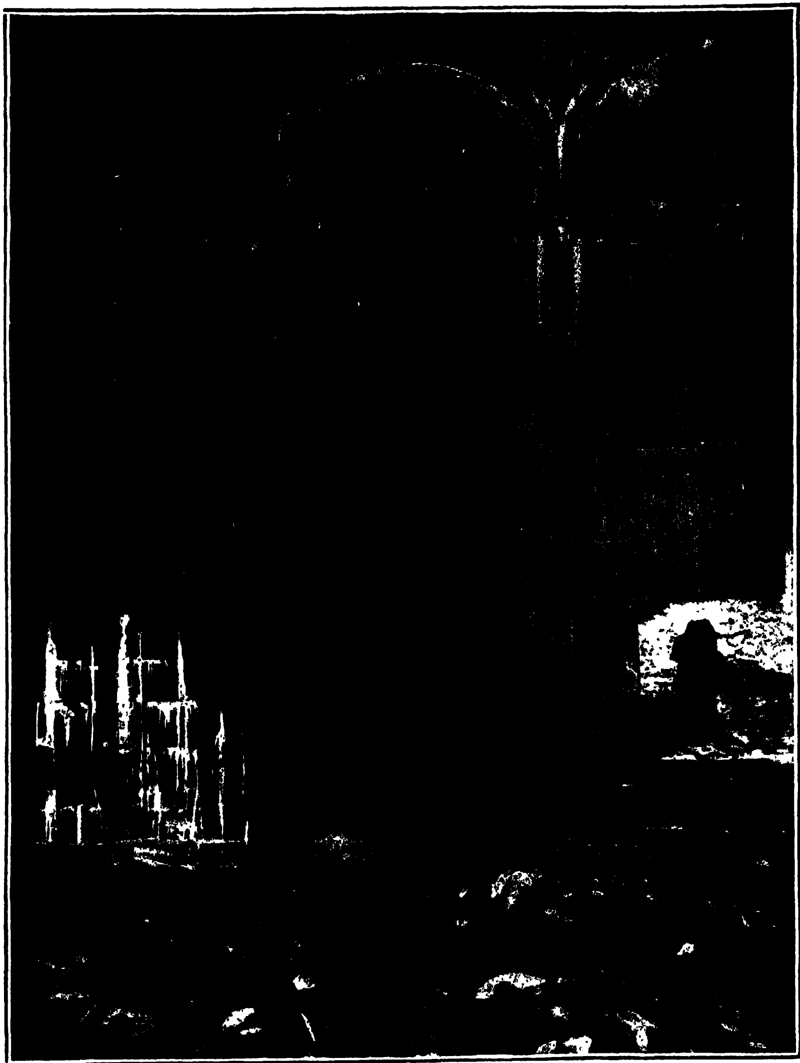


FIG. 73. ANI: NICHE IN EASTERN WALL OF CATHEDRAL.

Two inscriptions have been found upon this pile. One in Persian bears the date Heg. 595 or A.D. 1198-99, and is to the effect that one Kei-Sultan of the Beni-Cheddad family "forbids the sale of sheep and camels in front of this mosque of Abu-l-Mamran." The other is in Armenian and without date or personal sanction, being a mere exhortation to obey the order. One must suppose, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the minaret belonged to a mosque which has disappeared.[1]

The **cathedral** will surprise the traveller, even if he have come from Edgmiatsin. Although of small proportions, if judged by a European standard, it is nevertheless a stately building.[2] It bears the imprint of that undefinable quality, beauty, and can scarcely fail to arouse a thrill of delight in the spectator. It is seen to great advantage, adjacent edifices having disappeared (Fig. 72). The extreme simplicity of the design—an oblong figure of four almost unbroken walls—at once appeals to the eye. The skill with which these plain spaces have been treated is the feature which is admired in the next place. The apse is only indicated by two niches which recess back from the face of the wall on the east (Figs. 72 and 73). Two similar niches are seen on the south, and, I think, also on the north side; but their purpose is ornamental and to secure uniformity of design. The remainder of the space is diversified by the lightest of false arcades, which rises almost to the roof, embraces the niches and extends to all four walls. My illustration (Fig. 72) displays the southern and eastern fronts; that on the north resembles its counterpart, but is less ornate. The façade is practically the same as the eastern front, but without the niches and with a low doorway. Similar doorways are conspicuous on the northern and southern sides. One remarks the tall and slender pillars of the false arcades, the cushion form of the capitals with their richly chiselled faces, the low spring of the rounded arches which curve inwards at the base, but scarcely suggest, so slight is the curve, the horse-shoe shape. The row of these arched mouldings is pleasantly broken at the doorway, which is surmounted by a narrow window with a rectangular frame of chiselled stone. And the bold arched moulding of pointed form, which envelops door and window, takes the eye above the tops of the neighbouring arches and leads it upwards to the loftier roof of the transept.

The architecture of the roof is less single of feature. Multiplicity of outlines and contrast of shapes are the characteristics which are here displayed. At one level you have the aisles, at another the nave and transept, at yet another the supreme crown of the dome. Here it is a group of gables; there the large circle of the drum of the dome; there

[1] The conjecture which Brosset throws out that the mosque referred to may be the cathedral is not, I think, a happy one. For this minaret see especially Khanikoff (*op. cit.* pp. 135-36), Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, p. 31), and Abich (*Aus kauk. Land.* vol. i. p. 191). The inscription describes Kei-Sultan as "son of Mahmud, son of Chawir, son of Manuchar, Cheddadi." Kei-Sultan is not otherwise known. We must conclude that the Beni-Cheddad were still powerful in Ani as late as the end of the twelfth century.

[2] The dimensions of the interior are as follows, according to my measurements:—Length, 105 feet 6 in. (viz. 76 feet 6 in. to the dais of the apse, and 29 feet from the dais to the extremity of the recess); breadth, 65 feet 6 in.; breadth of apse, 29 feet 7 in.

again the cone formed by the roof of the dome. This uppermost member of the series has unhappily fallen in; but enough remains of the drum to enable the eye to complete the picture, and to reconstruct the delicate mouldings of a false arcade. We have in fact a roof scene essentially Byzantine in character, but which is quite free of that suggestion of a series of box-like elevations which is engendered by the appearance of some specimens of the style. On the contrary, we receive the impression of a stately simplicity underlying the diversity of outline and form.

The interior is quite remarkable from the standpoint of the history of architecture; it is also calculated to deserve the admiration of the lover of art. It has many of the characteristics of the Gothic style, of which it establishes the Oriental origin.[1] The dome is supported by four massive piers of coupled pillars with plain capitals. Four similar piers are placed at either extremity of the building, a pair at the entrance and one on each side of the apse. A feature of the edifice is the extreme narrowness of the aisles and the corresponding constriction of the side chapels at their eastern extremity. The relative proportions of the apse and of these minor apses may be discovered by a glance at the illustration of the eastern front, where the extent of the latter is indicated by the two arches with little windows, one on either side of the niches. The Gothic appearance of the interior is still further accentuated by the bold pointed arches which spring from the piers. Our curiosity is aroused by these characteristics; but our emotions awake as we contemplate the magnificent apse (Fig. 74).[2] That element of grandeur which we miss in Armenian churches is here made manifest in a high degree. It is imparted by the apse to the whole interior; and the apse becomes, by a happy inspiration of the architect, indeed the head and soul of the church.

Vestiges of paintings upon the ceilings have been observed by my predecessors; but I do not know that the building suffers from their destruction. The plaster has fallen, and the perfection of the masonry is exposed. The roofs as well as the walls are composed of stone, and, as usual in Armenian churches, no wood or metal has been used. Even at the present day the Armenian masons are possessed of exceptional skill; and their natural gifts have been here directed by the conceptions of genius. Although the interior is almost free of ornament, the art of the sculptor has been employed upon the enrichment of the outside niches, of the doorways and windows, and of the mouldings of the false arcade. In no case do we discover any trace of barbarism; the designs are sober and full of grace, the execution is beyond praise.[3] The impression which

[1] Texier reminds us that at the time when this cathedral was built (early eleventh century) the Romanesque style was universal in Europe (*op. cit.* p. 112). Yet in this building we have the characteristics of a style which might be found in Southern Europe in the thirteenth century—the pointed arch, the coupled piers. See also Fergusson, *op. cit.* p. 473.

[2] I must caution my reader against the drawing of this apse in plate ix. of Brosset's Atlas to the *Ruines d'Ani*.

[3] The cathedral has been recently constituted into quite a little museum, all fragments of sculptured stone found at Ani being preserved there. I photographed one of the most remarkable, which displays the familiar subject of the eagle and the hare (Fig.

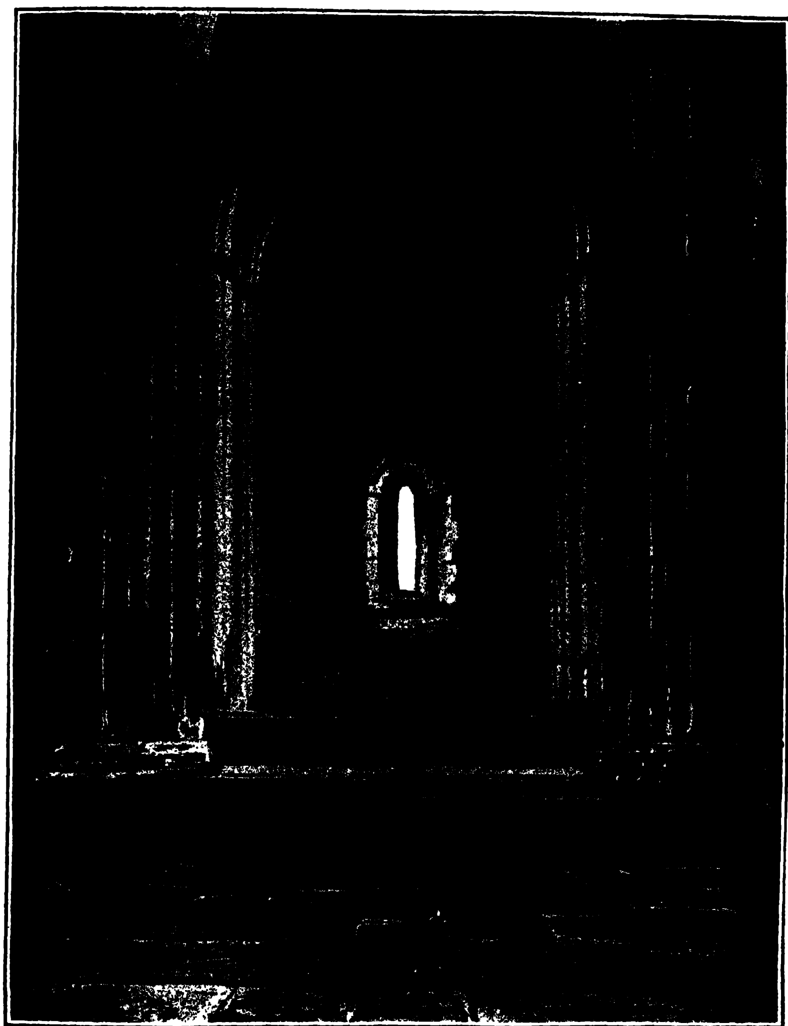


Fig. 74. Ani: Apse of the Cathedral.



FIG. 76. ANI: CHURCH OF ST. GREGORY FROM THE WEST.

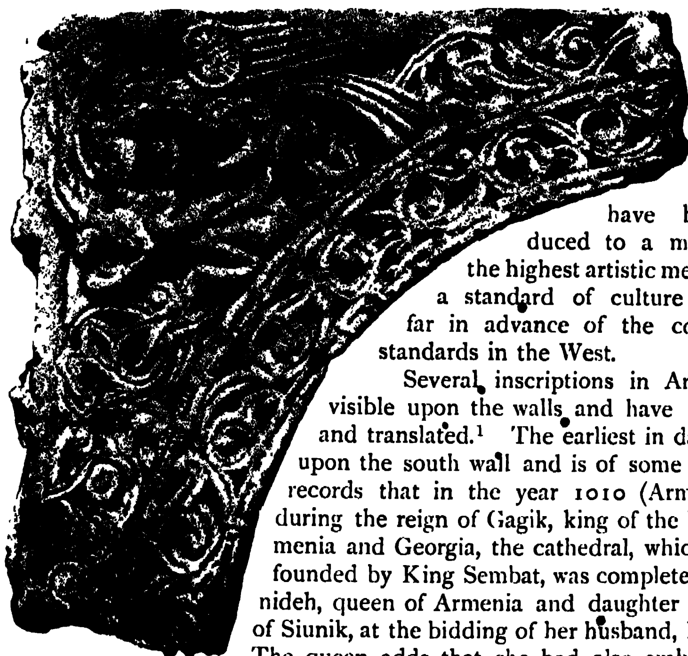


FIG. 76.
ANI: SCULPTURED STONE MOULDING.

we take away from our survey of these various features is that we have been introduced to a monument of the highest artistic merit, denoting a standard of culture which was far in advance of the contemporary standards in the West.

Several inscriptions in Armenian are visible upon the walls and have been copied and translated.[1] The earliest in date is found upon the south wall and is of some length. It records that in the year 1010 (Arm. era 459), during the reign of Gagik, king of the kings of Armenia and Georgia, the cathedral, which had been founded by King Sembat, was completed by Katranideh, queen of Armenia and daughter of the king of Siunik, at the bidding of her husband, King Gagik. The queen adds that she had also embellished the church with precious ornaments, an offering to Christ on behalf of herself and of her sons Sembat, Abas, and Ashot.[2] Two inscriptions belonging to the period of the occupation of Ani by the Byzantines figure upon the façade. Both appear to be without dates, but both refer to known personages. The one mentions the Empress Zoe (1042), and is a memorial to her general, Aron-Magistros, who was entrusted with the government of the city.[3] The other is an edict of Bagrat-Magistros, governor-general of the eastern provinces, abolishing by order of Constantine Dukas (A.D. 1059-67) certain taxes which pressed upon the inhabitants. Other inscriptions detail offerings on the part of private individuals; and the date of one, if it has been copied correctly, is as late as 1486.[4]

75). Another contains a bas-relief of three saints, and was probably placed above a doorway.

[1] Brosset, *Voyage Arch.* livr. 1, rapp. 3, pp. 93-95, and *Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 22-28.

[2] Siunik was one of the large provinces into which Armenia was divided. Samuel of Ani places the completion of the cathedral in Arm. era 457 = A.D. 1008. But he may refer to a stage which was not quite the ultimate one.

[3] Brosset identifies this Aron with the Aron-Vestes of the Byzantines, who was sent to these countries about the year 1042, was commander of the imperial forces, became governor of Vaspurakan, Ani being attached to his jurisdiction, and was still in possession of his office in 1048 (*Voyage Arch.* loc. cit. p. 93).

[4] I am not aware that any inscription mentions the name of the architect. *Sic vos*

An edifice of much smaller scale than the cathedral,[1] but closely resembling it in plan and style, is the church which is dedicated to **St. Gregory the Illuminator**, and which occupies a secluded site at the eastern extremity of the town upon the side of the cliff which breaks away to the bed of the Arpa by a series of black crags (No. 4). It is indeed a romantic spot. The side valley already mentioned joins the valley of the Arpa at this point, and is flanked by walls which descend to the river with bold bastions. The stream hisses in a gloomy ravine of grey and lichened rock. Subterraneous passages lead inwards into the town. In presenting my photograph of the building I must ask my reader to imagine for a moment that the ruinous porch has been removed (Fig. 76). He will then seize the characteristics with which he is already familiar: the oblong figure of unbroken walls; the elegant false arcades; the roof scene of nave, and transept and aisles, surmounted by a polygonal dome with a conical roof. The niches in the exterior of this church are perhaps less pronounced than in the case of the cathedral; but they are discovered upon all four walls. The stone is uniform of hue. Tall double shafts support the arches of the false arcade which extends round the building. The face of these arches has been richly sculptured with the most elegant traceries, while the spaces above the capitals, between the arms of the arches, display the forms of birds and flowers in moderate relief (Fig. 77, from north side). The architect has wisely discarded the use of the pointed arch in any part of this gem-like structure. But the slender pillars suggest the Gothic. The Byzantine feature of a *narthex* is wanting both to this building and to the cathedral. The porch has been added at a later date and is purely Saracenic in character. It displays several traceries and designs of high merit, among which I would call attention to the zigzag moulding which is so common in Norman architecture (Fig. 78).

Entering the building we are at once impressed by its almost perfect preservation; the plaster adheres to the walls and ceilings, and the frescos with which they were adorned are still intelligible. Yet here we have a monument erected nearly 800 years ago, and which has not yet been touched by a restorer's hand. The disposition of the interior resembles that of the cathedral; the dome rests on four piers, the apse is flanked by side chapels, which are of diminutive size. The frescos, which are also found upon the façade, represent Biblical subjects. They must have appreciably faded since they were seen and described by my predecessors.[2] The legends which accompany them are all in Georgian or in Greek characters. This fact has led to the supposition that the church was designed for the Greek form of worship. But we know that

non vobis! But Asoghik tells us that it was Tirdat or Tiridates, an Armenian architect who is reputed to have restored St. Sophia at Constantinople after its partial destruction by an earthquake.

[1] My measurements of the interior are:—Length, 41 feet (of which 15 feet is occupied by the apse measured from the dais to the extremity of the recess); breadth, 26 feet. Texier mentions an adjacent baptistery (?).

[2] See especially Texier, Muravieff, and Abich's *Aus kauk. Länd.* vol. i. pp. 198-99.

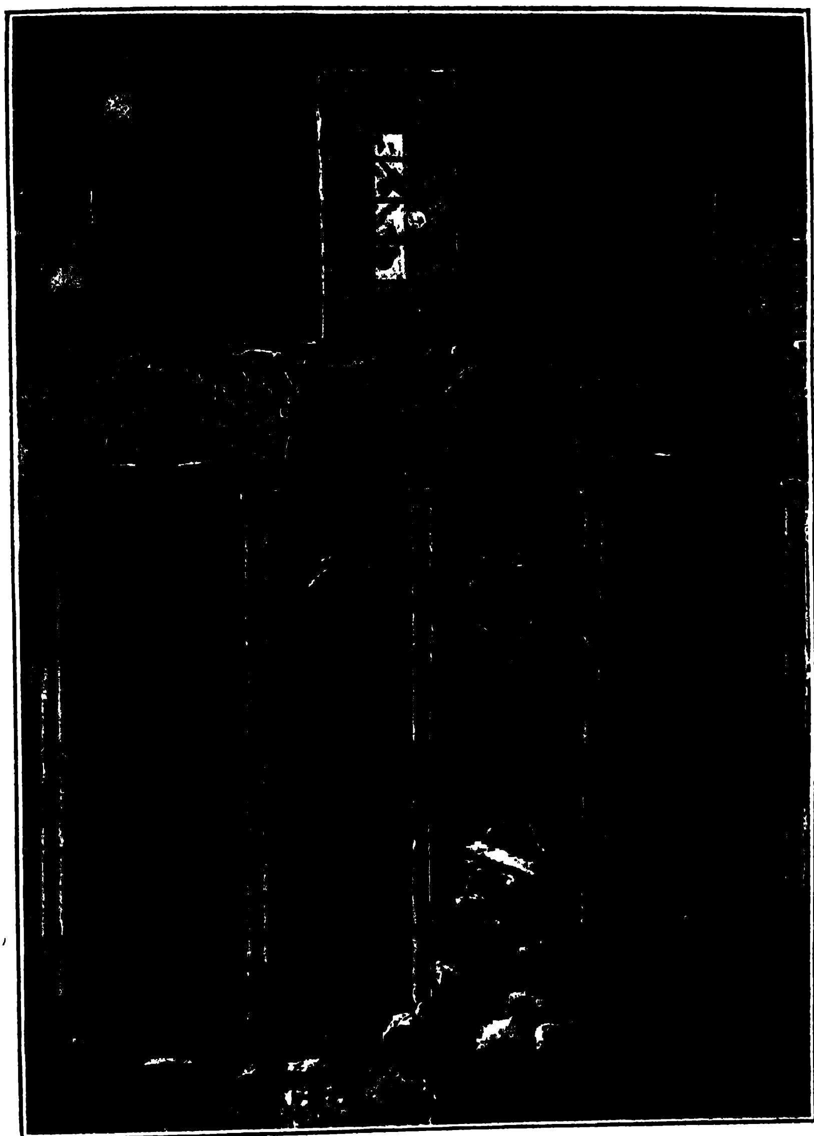


FIG. 77. ANI: NORTH WALL OF THE CHURCH OF ST. GREGORY.

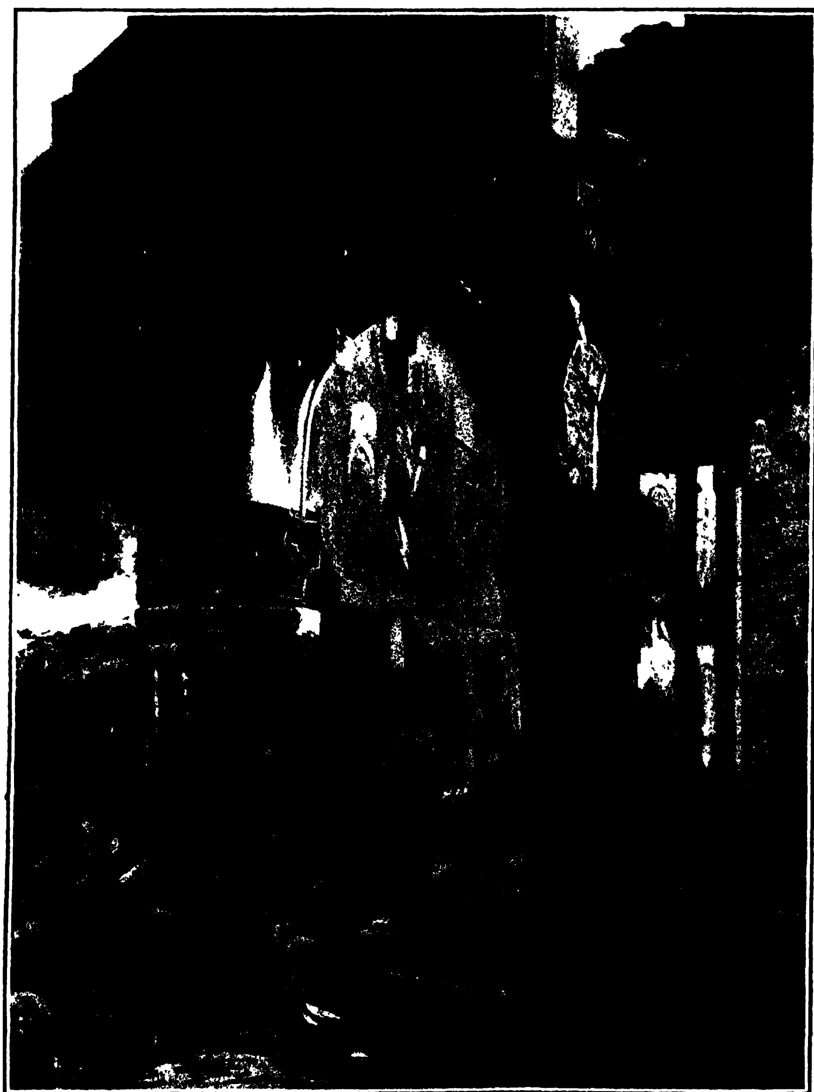


Fig. 78. Ani: Detail of the Porch of St. Gregory.

it was built by an Armenian, as the church of an Armenian convent dedicated to an Armenian saint. One can scarcely fail to remark the dim lighting of the interior, a characteristic or defect which also belongs to the cathedral. Both might easily have been flooded with light from the dome.

The commemorative inscriptions are found upon the exterior and are in Armenian character. Within each of the three most easterly arches upon the south wall there is an inscription of twenty-five lines. It would appear that the lines are carried across, and that they constitute a single text. We are informed that in the year 1215 (Arm. era 664), during the government of Zakarea, chief of the mandatories, and of his son Shahanshah, one Tigran, of the family of Hohentz, built a monastery upon this site in the hope that his good work would bring long life to his House and to the son of Zakarea. At the time when he bought it the place was covered with rocks and brushwood; but there was a building upon it known as *Our Lady of the chapel*. Tigran surrounded it with a wall, constructed dwellings for the monks, erected this church of St. Gregory, and enriched the church with ornaments and precious vessels. He also bestowed a permanent endowment upon the monastery.[1] The edifice is therefore a work of the period of Georgian occupation. An inscription upon the east wall belongs to a later epoch, the date being given as 759 of the Armenian era, or A.D. 1310.[2] But the city was still governed by a member of the family of Zakarea. It records that one Matheh, chief secretary of the ruler Shahanshah, restored some conduits which brought water to the monastery, but which had been destroyed during certain foreign or civil troubles. It supplies us with the names of two other personages—Khvandzeh, the wife of this Shahanshah, and Zakarea, their son.

In the immediate neighbourhood of this church, but upon a higher level, we observe two ruins which are of interest. The one consists of the remains of a **massive wall** and a **chamber** which stand in an isolated position (No. 22). They are of the character which is usually known as Cyclopean. The other ruin is that of a small and almost subterraneous **bath**. Recent excavations have disclosed subsidiary chambers and passages; but the bath itself, which is divided into four small vaulted chambers, could scarcely have accommodated more than four bathers at a time (No. 13).[3]

Not far from St. Gregory, as you follow down the stream of the Arpa, are met remains of a **walled enclosure** of the usual finished masonry and in fair preservation. The walls descend the cliff-side to a projecting mass of rock which rises from the bed of the river with almost vertical sides. On the edge of this promontory, overlooking the stream, is placed a little **chapel** which, although ruinous, still retains many of the elements of its former beauty (No. 9, Fig. 79). It is distinguished from the

[1] The inscription has been translated by Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 145-48).

[2] Brosset (*ibid.* p. 15). I was able to verify the date, about which Brosset expresses some doubt (*ibid.* p. 148).

[3] For these two ruins see also Abich, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 196-97.

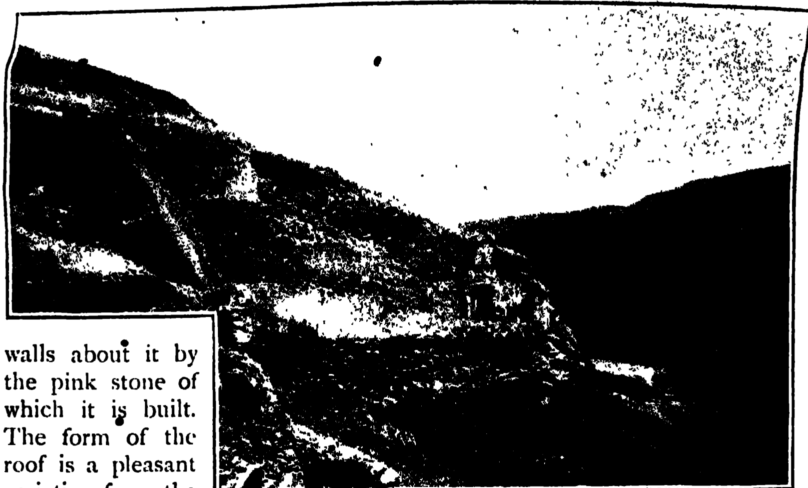


FIG. 79. ANI. WALLED ENCLOSURE AND CHAPEL.

walls about it by the pink stone of which it is built. The form of the roof is a pleasant variation from the prevailing type, as is also the plan of the interior. Six semicircular recesses are crowned by the circle of the dome. Contiguous to this elegant monument is a chamber or chapel of different form. At the upper end of the enclosure are seen the ruins of the long vaulted staircase which was taken across the enclosure and through the wall on the west, in order to debouch upon the ravine on the western side of the promontory, and so to lead down to the water's edge. About 300 yards still further down the current you observe the piers of a **bridge** of which the single arch has fallen in. It was on the cliff-side above this bridge that the remains of a gateway were seen by my predecessors, bearing an inscription of the year 1320. It commemorates the allocation of a tax on cattle to the monastery of St. Gregory by one Sargis, chief of the Custom-House. The gift is made for the repose of the soul of the master of Sargis, Shahanshah, and for the long life of Zakarea and the other sons of Shahanshah. Fragments of inscriptions found within the neighbouring enclosure yield the dates of 705 and 759 Arm. era (A.D. 1256 and 1310).[1] I am inclined to think it possible that the enclosure and chapel may have formed part of the same monastery of St. Gregory of which I have already described the church.

One of the most conspicuous buildings is the **mosque with the polygonal minaret** (No. 10, Fig. 80). It rises from the cliff on the right bank of the Arpa and overlooks the ruinous bridge. An Arabic inscription, done in brick and inlaid in the masonry of the minaret not far from the summit of that lofty column, displays to the city in colossal

[1] For these inscriptions see Brosset, *Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 11-13. He reminds us of the importance of the date 1320 (Arm. era. 769) as being the year after the great earthquake. I must take this opportunity to caution my reader against accepting the tradition mentioned by Muravieff (ap. Brosset, *Voyage Arch.* livr. 1, rapp. 3, p. 127) that the little chapel was built in A.D. 1000 by King Gagik I. I may also mention that we could discover no traces of the guardhouse adjacent to the bridge (*Ruines d'Ani*, p. 10).

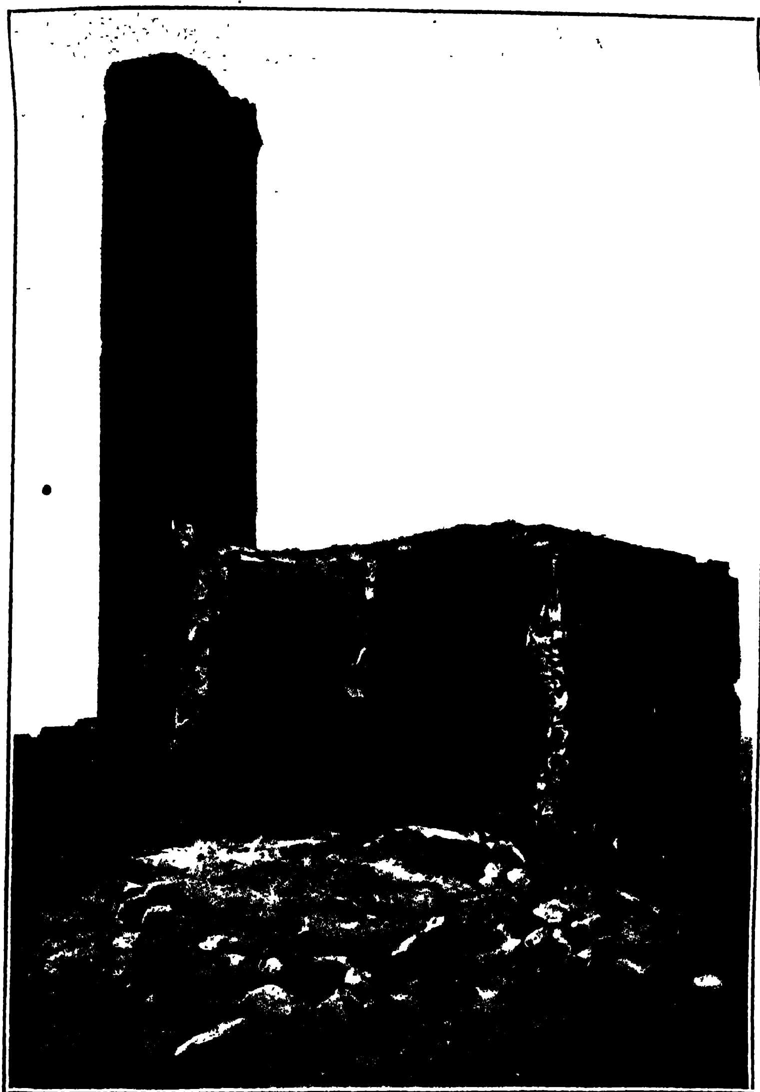


FIG. 80. ANI: MOSQUE AND MINARET.

characters the name of Allah. The mosque is the work of the first Mussulman prince of Ani, Manuchar, the son of Abulsevar. This fact appears to be established by a Cufic inscription which may be perceived in my illustration upon the north-west wall, the wall adjoining the minaret.[1] Just above it is seen a long Persian inscription which must be over two hundred years later in date. It is in fact an edict of the Mongol king of Persia, Abu-Said, one of the successors of Jenghiz Khan. Abu-Said is styled Bahadur, or the brave. The edict is therefore posterior to the year 718 of the Hegira (A.D. 1318-19), when that sultan acquired this personal title. The contents of this text are to the effect that the inhabitants of the city and neighbouring provinces had been suffering from illegal exactions on the part of their rulers. They had been emigrating and selling their goods and houses. The obnoxious imposts are specified and their abolition decreed.[2] Of the trilingual inscription which was found by Khanikoff I saw no traces; it was a mere fragment at the time of his visit. It mentions the name of Zakarea, to which is attached the title of Atabeg; and it may belong to the year 1237 and to the reign of Zakarea III.[3]

The architecture of the mosque resembles nothing that has yet been mentioned. Five massive and isolated pillars, of which originally there were six,[4] are seen rising from the floor of the chamber and supporting the vaultings of the roof. The circumference of these pillars is 9 feet 2 inches. The dimensions of the chamber itself are insignificant, being only 47 feet by 41 feet. Beneath it and below the level of the ground on the north-west, but overlooking the river upon the south-east, are four square apartments with narrow windows. My illustration, which was taken from the south, does not embrace this feature; nor does it quite reproduce the peculiar effect of the masonry, in which pink and black stones have been variously employed.

During the summer preceding our visit excavations had been made in Ani by the Russian archæologist Mr. N. Marr.[5] Not the least interesting result of his labours, as they were manifest upon the site, is the discovery of a line of walls with bastions, crossing the neck or narrowest portion of the platform from the ravine of the Arpa to that of the Tsaghkotz. The one extremity of this fortification starts from the former of these valleys in the immediate neighbourhood of the mosque. South-west of this neck, with its transverse rampart, the platform again opens out; and at the same time it attains its greatest elevation, gathering together and composing a hill with a flat top. The summit and sides of this hill display the substructures of walls and buildings; and at least two edifices in a fair

[1] Khanikoff ap. Brosset, *Voyage Arch.* livr. 1, rapp. 3, p. 138.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 138, and *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 30.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 140, and *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 31.
[4] Muravieff ap. Brosset, *Voyage Arch.* loc. cit. p. 129.
[5] Mr. Marr has published an account of his discoveries of new epigraphical material in Armenia in the *Zapiski* of the Eastern Section of the Imp. Russian Arch. Society, vol. viii., 1893, pp. 69-103. He contributes four new inscriptions from Ani. I have not been able to find any account of his excavations.

state of preservation rise against the background of sky. One can scarcely doubt that this strong position was the site of the old fortress of Ani before it became a city and the residence of the king. It is flanked by the two ravines with the two rivers, which presently unite. It is only accessible from the level ground on the north-east. But on that side, as we have seen, it has the form of a narrow isthmus, easily defensible by a line of walls. This fortress must have composed the nucleus of the more recent city—that inner fortress of which we read. Upon the summit of the hill, some four hundred feet above the rivers, was built the



FIG. 81. ANI: BUILDING ON THE CITADEL.

citadel. And there is ground for supposing that the citadel was also the palace, as in the case of Trebizond and perhaps also of Melazkert.

Unfortunately nothing remains of the actual walls of the palace; and the buildings which I have mentioned are two small churches. One stands upon the north side of the fortified eminence, and the other upon the south. The former is not noteworthy, except for the fact that its northern wall rises from lower levels and composes part of the wall of the citadel. But the edifice on the south is of considerable interest. It consists of two vaulted chambers placed side by side, and having the inner wall in common (No. 28, Fig. 81, taken from the north). The more southerly is the largest; and the round arches which support the roof rest upon four pilasters of curious design. I photographed one of the best preserved among them, which is adorned with the figures of two birds in low relief (Fig. 82). They are represented in the act of pouncing upon animals. The pilasters are composed of blocks of black

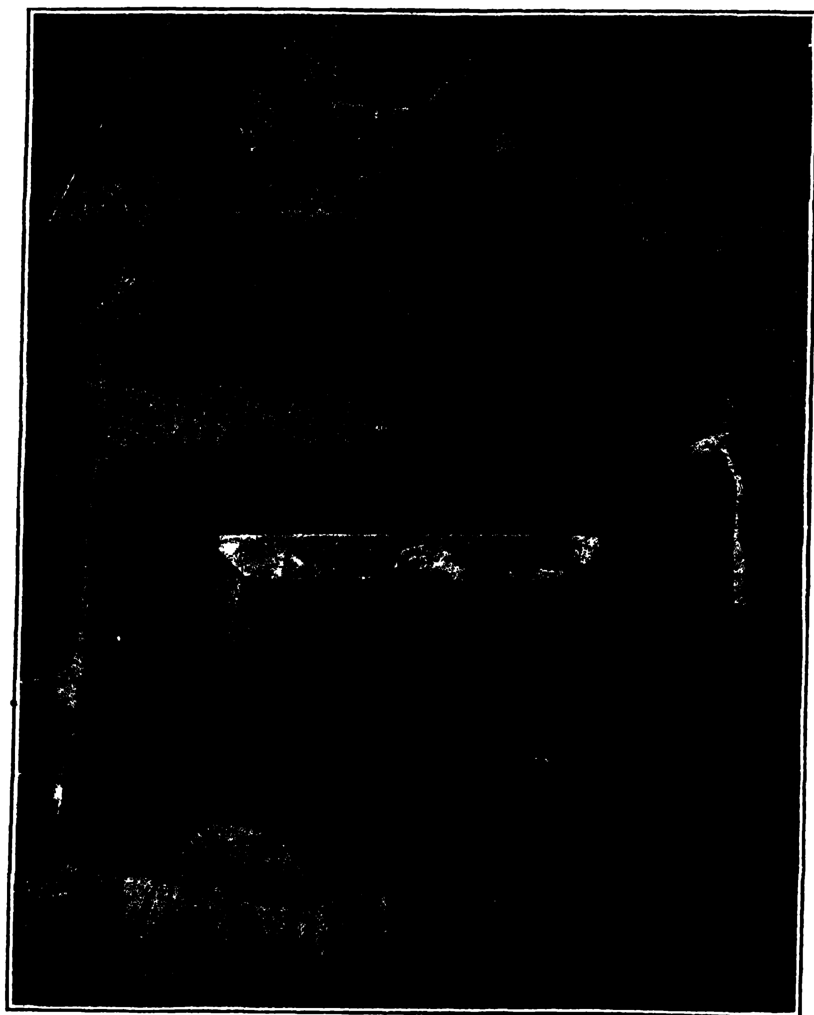


FIG. 83. ANI: DETAIL OF DOORWAY OF CHAPEL NEAR CITADEL.

stone; while for the capitals and the upper portion of the building only pink stone has been used. The façade and the apse have fallen away. The dimensions are small: a length of 30 feet 9 inches and a breadth of 17 feet 4 inches. One of my predecessors discovered in the contiguous building a bas-relief upon which was portrayed two figures on horseback, one of which is St. George with the dragon at his feet. But this piece, as well as another, in which a mounted and aureoled archer is displayed, surrounded by the forms of birds and wild animals, is no longer to be seen. I showed the reproductions in Brosset's Atlas to the aged priest; he recognised the latter of these sculptures and informed us that it had been stolen. Quite probably both are now lost in some museum.[1] Elements derived from Assyrian art may be recognised



FIG. 82. ANI: PILASTER IN THE BUILDING ON THE CITADEL.

[1] The interior of the building which forms the subject of my illustration is given by Brosset in plate xiv. of the Atlas to the *Ruines d'Ani*. The detail and ornament there portrayed do not correspond with reality. The devils are more or less imaginary, and there appears to be only one of them in the actual design, viz. on the south wall, the first pilaster as you enter from the west—in low relief. Brosset styles this interior "a hall in the citadel"; but the following considerations are against this view: —1. It is oriented east; 2. It obviously had an apse; 3. Above the apse you see the form of a cross sculptured on the face of the arch which still remains.

The bas-reliefs are given by Brosset, plates xxxv. and xxxvii. The former (representing the archer) was found in the valley of the Tsaghkotz with an inscription in Armenian, "Christ have pity on the lady Shushan, thy servant." This personage may be identified with the wife of the Pahlavid Grigor, mother of Vahram.

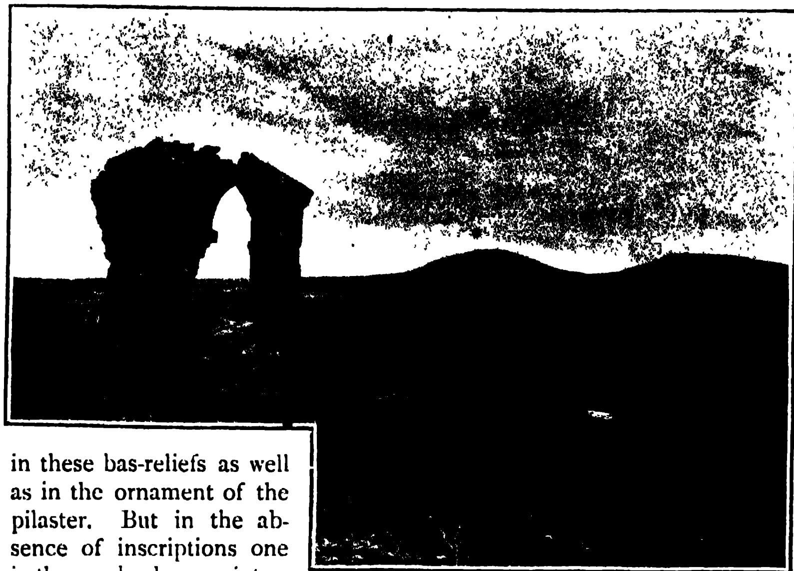


FIG. 84. ANI: LANDSCAPE FROM THE SOUTHERN EXTREMITIES OF THE SITE.

in these bas-reliefs as well as in the ornament of the pilaster. But in the absence of inscriptions one is thrown back upon internal evidence in assigning a date to the south chapel.

Such is the site of the ancient fortress of Ani, which must have enjoyed a fine view over the city. I observed that this view comprises the south and west sides of the cathedral, while the north side is turned towards the town. The fact that the south wall of that edifice has been more profusely decorated than its counterpart which faces north confirms the supposition that the palace was situated within the citadel, and that it was for the royal windows that the decorative resources of the architect were principally displayed.

If we descend the hill of the citadel in a southerly direction, as it falls away to the crags which separate the two ravines about the confluence of the rivers, we cross the remains of an inner wall and pass the ruin of a **little chapel**, of which the four piers as well as the cupola still stand. I photographed the charming detail of the doorway on the south, overlooking the Arpa Chai (No. 29, Fig. 83).[1] What a contrast between these classical mouldings and the somewhat barbarous architecture of the chapel in the citadel, between the sobriety of the designs in these bands of sculptured stone and the wild spirit of the ornament on those pilasters! Ani is indeed a museum of architectural styles—a characteristic in keeping with her geographical position and with the inquisitive and impressionable culture of her inhabitants. Just west of this building is seen a piece of masonry which is in the last stage of decay (No. 30, Fig. 84). It may represent the apse of another chapel. From here the view ranges over

[1] This building must be the subject of plate xiii. in Brosset's Atlas to the *Ruines d'Ani*.



Fig. 85. Ani: Chapel of St. Gregory. East Side.

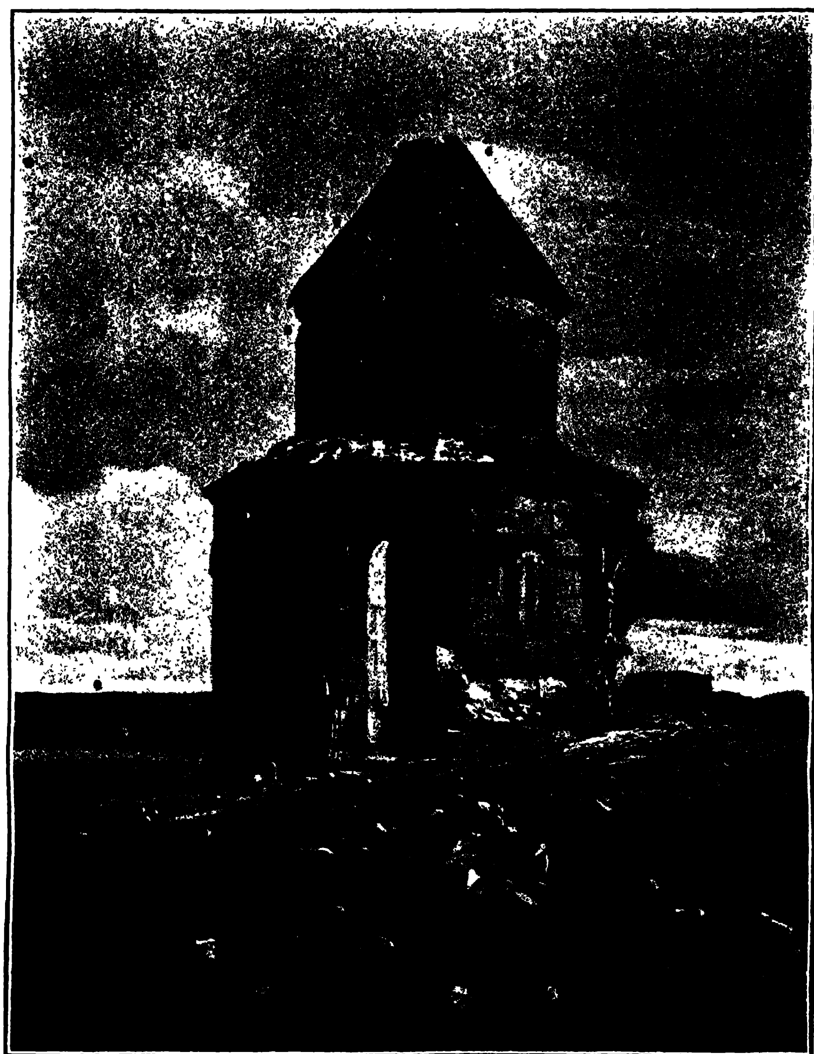


FIG. 86. ANI: CHAPEL OF ST. GREGORY, ENTRANCE.

the crags below the citadel, of which the most southerly is crowned by the walls of a third chapel. The Arpa is seen emerging from the deep ravine on the left of the ruin; it is joined by its affluent in the neighbourhood of the rock with the chapel.[1]

Just below the standpoint of this picture are situated the remains of the outer wall which encircled the peninsula. At the extremity of the figure stands a tower, which is concealed by the lie of the ground. But portions of the wall are visible in the illustration; and it appears to have extended along the valley of the Alaja in a northerly direction, and to have been joined to the outer fortifications of the city on the side of the plain. Where I examined the masonry of this wall I found it faced on both sides, and 3 feet 4 inches in thickness. Issuing from the citadel or inner fortress, we examined the substructures of a curious building which had been recently brought to light by Mr. Marr. But the length of this notice warns me that I must confine it to a description of the monuments which are still erect.

Let us therefore retrace our steps in the direction of the town, keeping as close as we may to the ravine of the Alaja, the ancient Tsaghkotzadzor or Vale of Flowers. On the summit of the cliff, in full view of the city, rises a circular building with a drum-shaped dome and a conical roof. Of this edifice, **the chapel of St. Gregory** (No. 5), I am able to present three photographs, one of the east side (Fig. 85), another of the entrance on the west (Fig. 86), and a third of the interior (Fig. 87). It is a charming little monument, which, like the cathedral, blends elements of Byzantine and Gothic art. But the niche is here again a prominent feature, a feature dear to the architecture of the East. The body of the edifice is polygonal rather than circular, having no less than twelve sides. Of these six are recessed, the niches facing the town being framed by ornamental arches with classical cornices. The six niches correspond with the same number of cavities in the design of the interior. Although the inside diameter is not more than about 30 feet, including these cavities,[2] yet the impression as you enter the chapel is one of space and height. Especially remarkable is the great depth of the dome. Traces of paintings may be observed upon the walls. Two small vaulted chambers have been built into the wall on the east side, and are now in a ruinous condition. They are seen in the illustration on either side of the window. They may have served the purpose of sepulchral chambers, of which there are also vestiges outside the building upon the north side.

We learn from the inscriptions that the chapel was dedicated to St. Gregory; and it is a work of the period of the Armenian kings. It seems to have been used as a place of burial by the Pahlavuni or Pahlavid family, which furnished some of the most illustrious names in Armenian history. The great noble who led the faction which was opposed to the cession of Ani to the Byzantines was a Pahlavid, Vahram. He met his

[1] The rock with the chapel is described by Abich (*op. cit.* vol. i. p. 192). It was strongly fortified.

[2] It is not exactly symmetrical, the measurement from west to east being nearly 31 feet.

death in battle against the Beni-Cheddad of Dvin in A.D. 1047. Embodying as he did the policy of resistance *à outrance* both to Mussulmans and Greeks, he has been the idol of Armenian patriotism. The name of this hero figures in the inscription over the door, which, although without a date, is probably assignable to him. He bestows the revenue of certain shops upon the church of St. Gregory to defray the cost of masses for the soul of his son Apughamir. In the same place have been found inscriptions of the mother of Vahram, the lady Shushan, making over certain revenues to the same church and recording the number of the masses obtained in return. She is styled the wife of the prince Grigor. But a date is happily forthcoming to elucidate the identity of these personages. It is furnished by a long inscription of no less than fourteen lines upon the north wall. Record is made that in the year of the Armenian era 489 (A.D. 1040) Aplgharib, prince of Armenia, erected a sepulchre in this place[1] for his father Grigor, of whom he describes himself as the youngest son, for his brother Hamzeh, and for his maternal uncle Seda. Masses are to be said for his mother Shushan, for his father Grigor, for his maternal uncle Seda, and for his brother Hamzeh. I cannot help thinking that the sepulchre referred to is represented by the remains which I observed upon the north side of this building. And the vaulted chambers in the east wall may be the tombs of Grigor and his wife Shushan, an inscription over the highly decorated window on that side being a prayer to Christ for mercy upon Grigor.[2]

A question of great interest with reference to this building is whether it may be regarded as the same church which is mentioned by the historians as a work of King Gagik I. We are informed by Samuel of Ani that in the year 447 (A.D. 998) a church of St. Gregory was completed by this monarch in the Tsaghkotzadzor. The same event is recorded in the pages of Kirakos, who gives the same date, and describes the situation as overlooking the Valley of the Tsaghkotz.[3] Asoghik tells us that it was built on the model of a large church at Vagharshapat, dedicated to the same saint, which had fallen into ruin. He adds that the edifice of King Gagik was built on a high platform on the side of the Tsaghkotz, and in possession of an admirable view. He speaks of three doorways and of the marvellous dome, reproducing the appearance of the sky.[4] I did not observe more than one door to this edifice, and perhaps the church which is referred to by these authorities was some larger building in the immediate neighbourhood which has disappeared.

[1] Brosset translates, "J'ai construit ce lieu de repos." But it surely cannot refer to the chapel itself, which, as we have seen, has inscriptions of the mother of Aplgharib, and must therefore have been in existence before 1040. Brosset therefore supposes that the *restoration* of the church is alluded to (*Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 37 and 106). For a more probable version of the inscription see Alishan, *Shirak*, p. 53.

[2] For the inscriptions see Brosset (*Voyage Arch.* loc. cit. p. 91, and *Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 36 *seq.*). Aplgharib was brother to Vahram. I could find no trace of the curious figure found upon one of the windows which Brosset refers to (pp. 38 *seq.*). On the other hand, I was able to identify the two inscriptions last mentioned.

[3] Kirakos ap. Dulaurier, *Recherches sur la Chron. Arm.* p. 280.

[4] Asoghik ap. Brosset, *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 106.

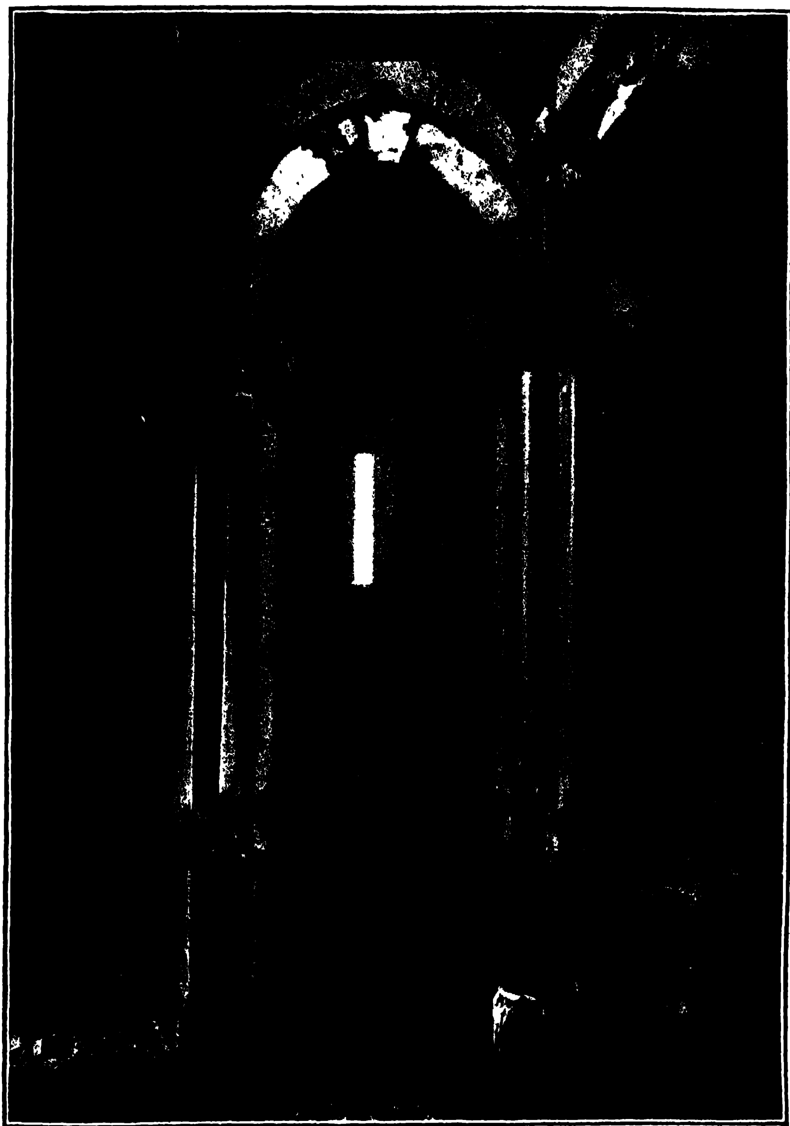


FIG. 87. ANI: INTERIOR OF THE CHAPEL OF ST. GREGORY.

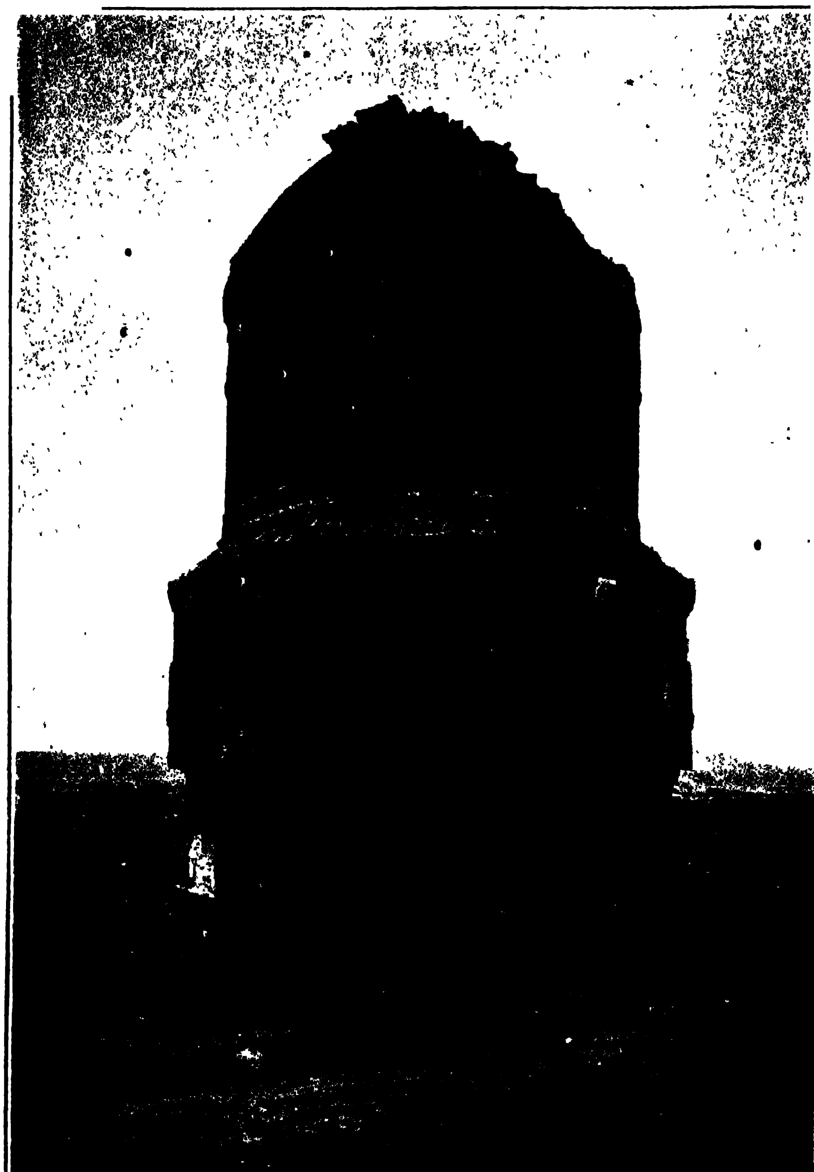


Fig. 88. Ani: Chapel of the Redeemer.

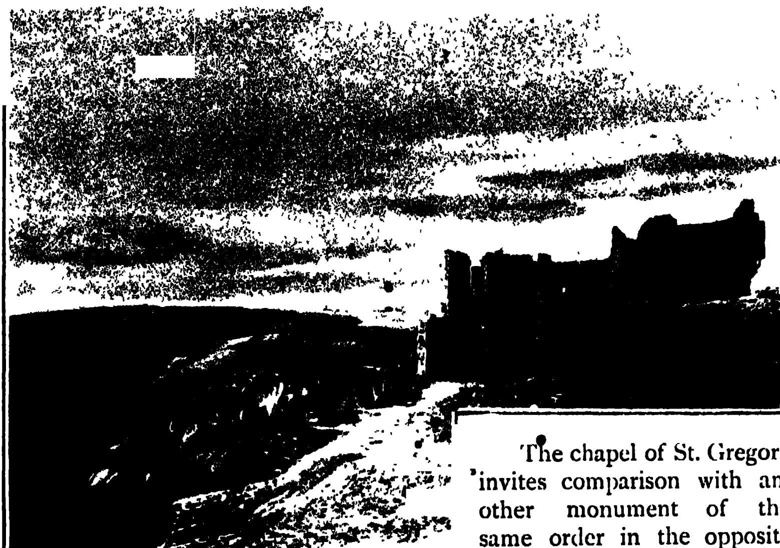


FIG. 89. ANI: THE CASTLE.

The chapel of St. Gregory invites comparison with another monument of the same order in the opposite quarter of the town (No. 6, Fig. 88).[1] My illustration was taken from the north. The design is less elaborate and the dimensions are rather larger, the dome especially having a much greater span. But the effect produced by the interior lacks the magic of the companion building, while the symmetry is marred by the recess for the altar on the east side. This building will not endure for many years longer, unless steps be taken to save it from falling in. The lower portions are in a state of advanced decay. The ornament on the exterior closely resembles that employed upon the cathedral. Inscriptions bristle upon the panels of the false arcades. One records that in the year 483 (A.D. 1034) the prince Aplgharib, having journeyed to Constantinople by order of Sembat Shahanshah, obtained with great difficulty and at considerable expense a piece of the Holy Cross. Upon his return he built this church, and directed that nightly services should be held within it until the coming of Christ. The name of Surb-Phrkich, or church of the Redeemer, is given in this and the following inscription, and may be applied either to this chapel or to some neighbouring church with which it was in connection. A second inscription belongs to the Armenian year 490 (A.D. 1041), and mentions the contemporary reign of Sembat, son of Gagik Shahanshah.[2] The **chapel of the Redeemer** is therefore the work of the same Pahlavid, Aplgharib, who built the sepulchres to the chapel of St. Gregory, and it belongs to the period of the kings.[3]

1 Abich confuses the sites of these two monuments in his *Reisebriefe* (*op. cit.*).

2 Such is the translation of this inscription given by the editor of Aristakes of Lastivert. Brosset appears to have made a palpable error (*Ruines d'Ani*, p. 21, inscription of Christaphor).

3 Probably the inscription of this same Aplgharib given by Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*,

Continuing our walk along the cliff above the valley of the Alaja, we pass a lofty mound, surmounted by the ruin of a wall (No. 31). The old priest was of opinion that it denotes the site of the priestly **synod house**, where endowments were received and other business of the Church transacted. A little further, and west of this mound we stay to examine a small chapel which has been hollowed out of a solid mass of rock. But our attention is distracted from this fantastic object by the walls and yawning apartments of the **castle** (No. 12, Fig. 89). It is situated in the extreme north-western angle of the town, where the ravine of the Alaja is joined by the side-ravine already mentioned in the description of the site. My photograph displays the southern side of this extensive edifice and the junction of the valleys. The entrance is on the east and faces the town (Fig. 90). You admire the exquisite masonry of the walls and the elaborate decoration of the doorway. That doorway is one of the most conspicuous objects in Ani; and inasmuch as this building has been sought to be identified with the royal palace, it has been despoiled of many of its mosaics by patriotic Armenians, who strip them off and carry them away as souvenirs. My reader will observe the recurrence of the form of a Greek cross in the ornament on the face of the gate. This ornament consists of inlays or, as one might say, mosaics composed of a light red and of a black stone. The effect is original and pleasant to the eye. In the absence of any inscriptions—we searched in vain for any trace of writing both on the outside of the edifice and within its walls—I am inclined to consider that this so-called palace was nothing more than a magazine and barrack, in close connection with the outer defences of the city on the vulnerable side, the side of the plain. The only ornament in the interior was found over a doorway, and consisted of a chain moulding and inlays of red and black stone. On the other hand, the uses of the place appear to be denoted by the vaulted passages and by the spacious underground chambers. Two of these chambers, smaller in size, have evidently served as dungeons.[1]

Two edifices of considerable interest remain to be mentioned. Both are situated in quarters of the town which must have been densely built over, and both are in an advanced state of decay. The more westerly is perhaps the most curious of all the monuments of Ani, and I do not pretend to have quite unravelled the complexities of its compound plan (No. 2). The eye is engrossed by the ruin of a spacious portal, longest from west to east. The western and southern walls have fallen away; but the east front and the whole of the vaulting of the most easterly

p. 28) belongs to this chapel. It runs thus:—"Under the pontificate of Ter Petros and the reign of Sembat son of Gagik Shahanshah in the year 485 (A.D. 1036) I, the Marzpan Aplgharib, son of the prince Grigor, grandson of Apughamir and brother of Vahram and Vasak, constructed at great expense this Surb-Phrkich in the metropolis of Ani." This inscription would establish as a fact that the chapel itself was dedicated to the Redeemer.

[1] A perfect labyrinth of confusion has been brought into existence by the attribution of the east front of the portal of the church of the Apostles to this castle or palace (see plate xix. of Brosset's Atlas). Happily I am able to correct the error. It has been instrumental in leading Brosset to assign all the inscriptions found in that church to this castle. The name "palace of the Pahlavids" is purely imaginary.

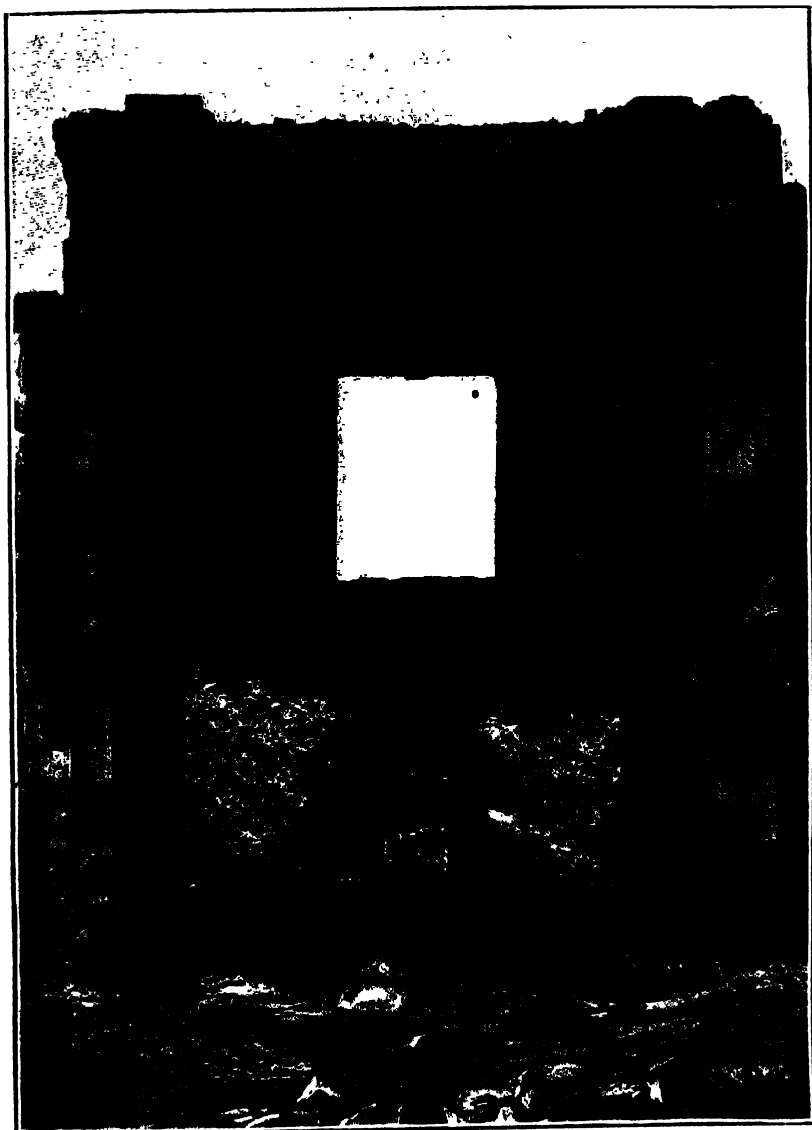


FIG. 90. ANI: DOORWAY OF THE CASTLE.

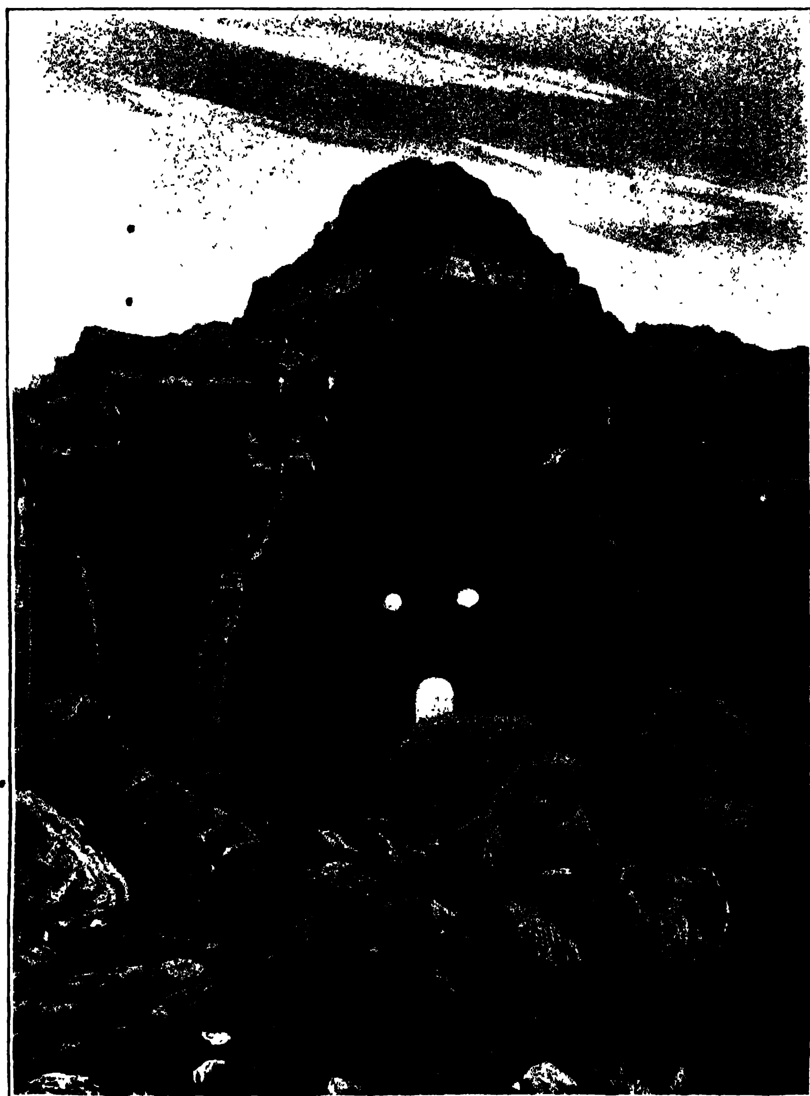


Fig. 91. Ani: Portal of the Church of the Apostles from the West.

portion have been spared by the ravages of time. Entering this portal from the west (Fig. 91), we are able to reconstruct in fancy the features of the design. There appear to have been three distinct domes to the roof, supported by arches resting on pillars. Of the three divisions which were thus introduced into the interior, the largest was that in the centre. That on the east alone remains ; and we may gauge the dimensions of the whole figure when we consider that this division measures within the pillars a square of 19 feet. The architecture is pure Arab or Saracenic, recalling that of the mosque. It is certainly later than the period of the kings. As in the mosque, the effect is heightened by the mixture of black with reddish blocks of stone. A large stone, sculptured with a cross, is inlaid in the south-east wall, and may be the same as the one which has been described by my predecessors as containing the figure of a double-headed eagle.[1] The walls are covered with inscriptions. The outer face of this portal or east front is extremely elaborate (Fig. 92). The doorway on that side forms the centre of a Saracenic façade in which honeycomb vaultings, false niches, and a mosaic of black and pink stones have all been made to play a part. Four inscriptions in Armenian are observed upon this front.

This portal must have served as an entrance to two or more chapels. Of these one alone remains. It is entered by a doorway with rich mouldings in the north wall of the most easterly division. The interior is of grey stone, and it is disposed in four semicircles.[2] But the dimensions are small as compared to those of the portal, and the portal is much longer than the chapel. The ruinous masonry upon the west of the latter building indicates the site of a second and contiguous chamber or chapel. That of a third is denoted by similar evidence upon the east wall. This structure projected beyond the east front of the portal, to which it was placed at right angles. Traces of it may be seen in my illustration. It bears an Armenian inscription.

The inscriptions, which unhappily I had not leisure to identify, have been already published and translated.[3] The earliest in date appears to have been found upon the doorway of the chapel, and identifies it as a work of the period of the kings. It records that in the year 480 (A.D. 1031) Apughamir, son of Vahram, prince of princes, bestowed an endowment upon this **church of the Apostles** for the health and long life of his brother Grigor. My reader is already familiar with these names of members of the Pahlavid family. The inscriptions upon the portal are of much later dates, ranging over the period of Georgian occupation when the city was governed by the Mkhargrdzels. Some are in the name of the Mongol overlord. Most are of the nature of public proclamations ; and from the one latest in date we learn that in A.D. 1348 members

[1] Brosset, *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 51, and plate xxxvi. No. 3 of the Atlas. It has been wrongly attributed to the castle.

[2] Abich describes this chapel as "a magnificent church in the form of a Greek cross with a central rotunda and four large semicircular niches at the sides" (*op. cit.* vol. i. p. 190).

[3] See Brosset (*Voyage Arch.* livr. 1, rapp. 3, pp. 86, 100, 101, 106, 109; and *Ruines d'Ani*, pp. 48-52).

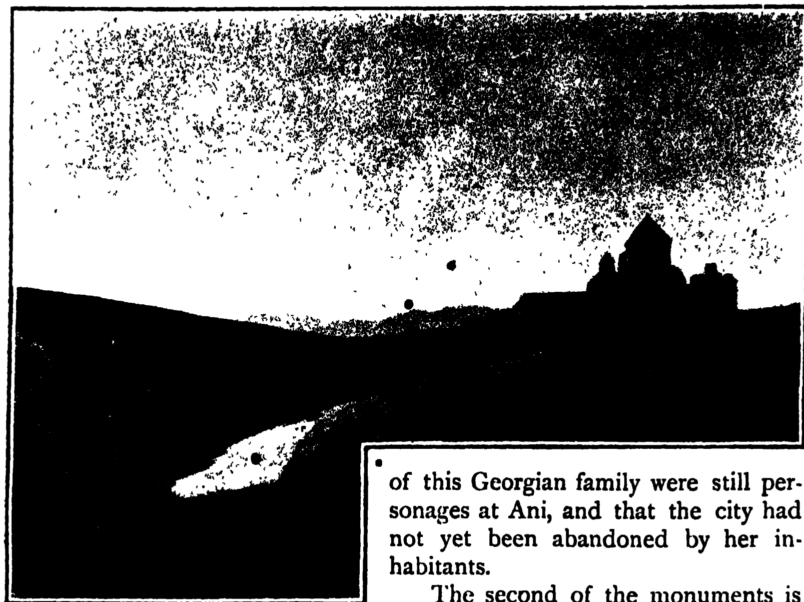


FIG. 93. THE MONASTERY OF KHOSHA VANK: EAST SIDE.

of this Georgian family were still personages at Ani, and that the city had not yet been abandoned by her inhabitants.

The second of the monuments is also the last which I need mention; it is situated between the cathedral and the chapel of the Redeemer (No. 3). It is of small dimensions and, as usual, of great elegance; but the roof and the whole of the upper portion have unhappily fallen away. In fact, the only portions which are still erect are the north wall, the apse, and part of the south wall. A vaulted chamber extends around the edifice. Two bas-reliefs are seen in two of the panels of the arcade upon the north wall. The one on the left evidently represents the subject of the Annunciation; while that on the right probably portrays the figures of two saints. I could not discover any trace of an inscription. But the old priest bases his opinion that the ruin is that of a church dedicated to St. Stephen upon an inscription which has disappeared.[1]

My illustration of the castle (Fig. 89) will have revealed a characteristic of the ancient city which is of historical interest. The ravine of the Alaja, as well as both the side valleys, which open respectively to this ravine and to that of the Arpa, present the appearance of having been riddled into quite a network of cavities; such is the number of the troglodyte dwellings which they contain. Legend peoples this underground city with the souls of those citizens of Ani who, sooner than emigrate into distant lands, preferred to die in her defence. A stir and hum, as of a teeming and busy populace, may be heard by night above the rustling of the Arpa Chai.[2] The tuff composing the cliffs must at all times have invited such burrowings; and we know that, when Ani was surprised

[1] This is the chapel which Abich names "Kirche der Maria Verkündigung" (*op. cit.* vol. i. p. 193).

[2] Abich, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 199.

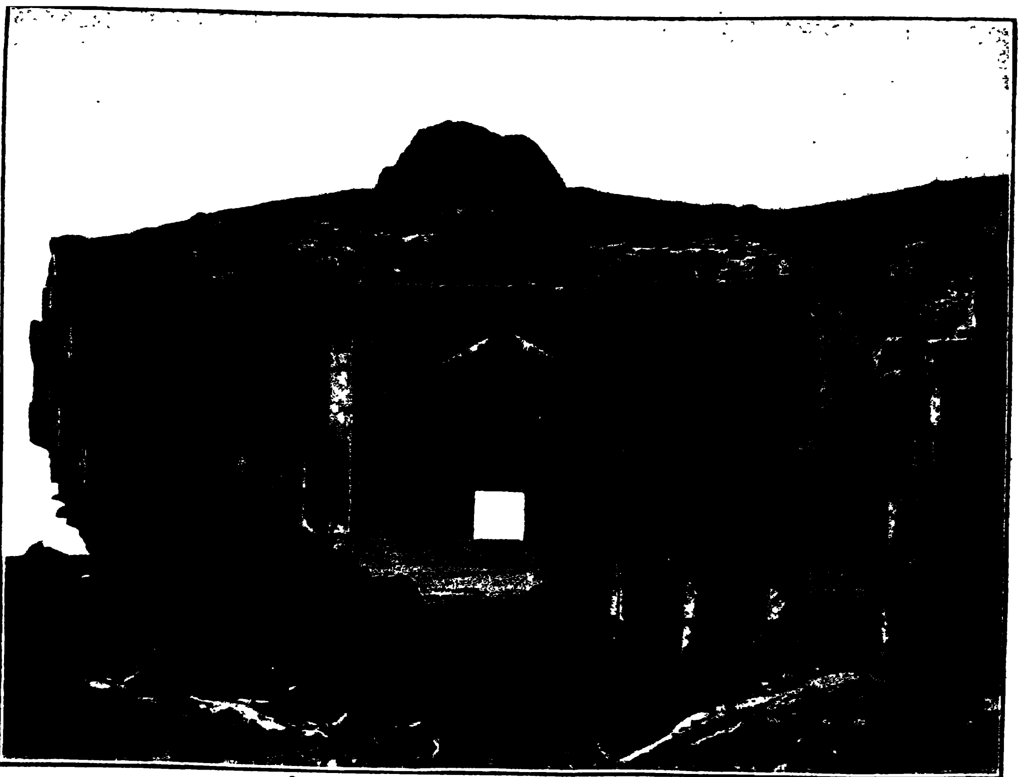


FIG. 92. ANI: EAST FRONT OF THE CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES.

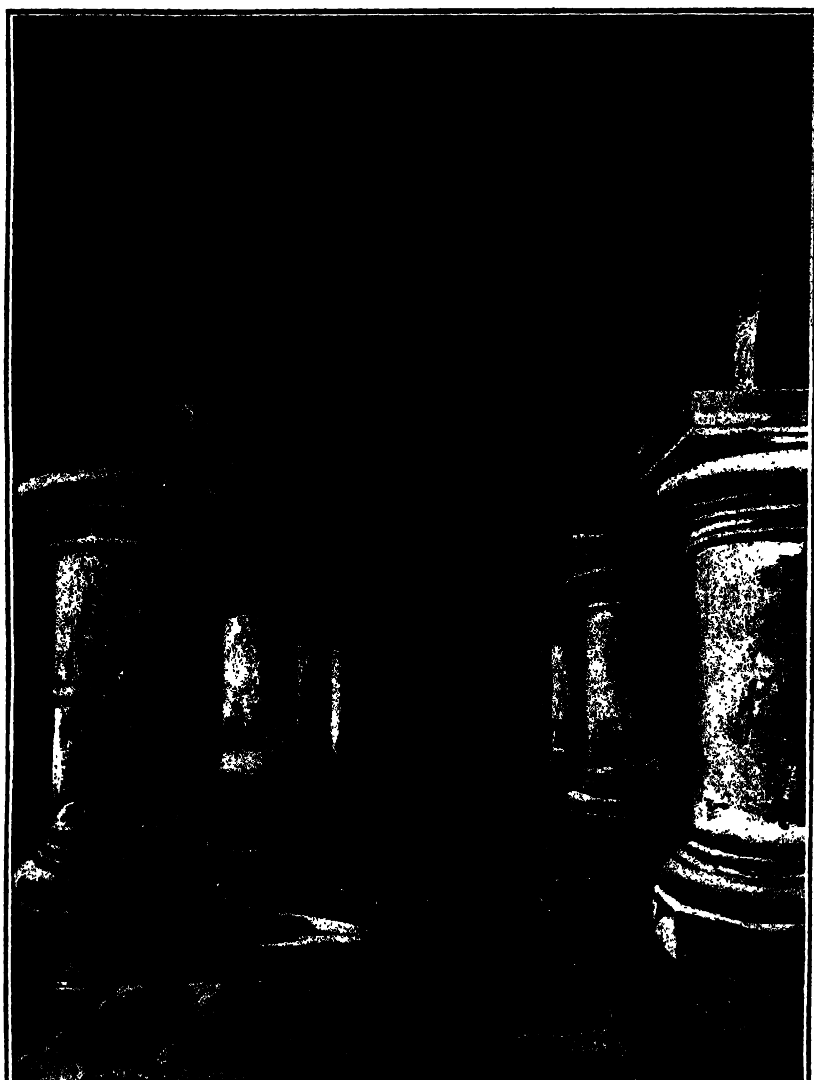


FIG. 95. KHOSHA VANK: PRONAOS.

during the reign of Thamar by the emir of Ardabil, the inhabitants, who were still numerous, took refuge in these caves.[1]

Our conception of the city of the kings would be wanting in an essential feature were we to pass over the neighbouring **convent of Khosha Vank** (Fig. 93). It was there, we can scarcely doubt, that the monarch was often wont to deliberate; and it was under the shadow of those walls that his bones were laid to rest by the side of his ancestors. The triumphal archway through which he would pass on his way from the capital may still be seen on the summit of the cliff on the right bank of the Arpa Chai (Fig. 94). The cloister is situated, as we have seen,

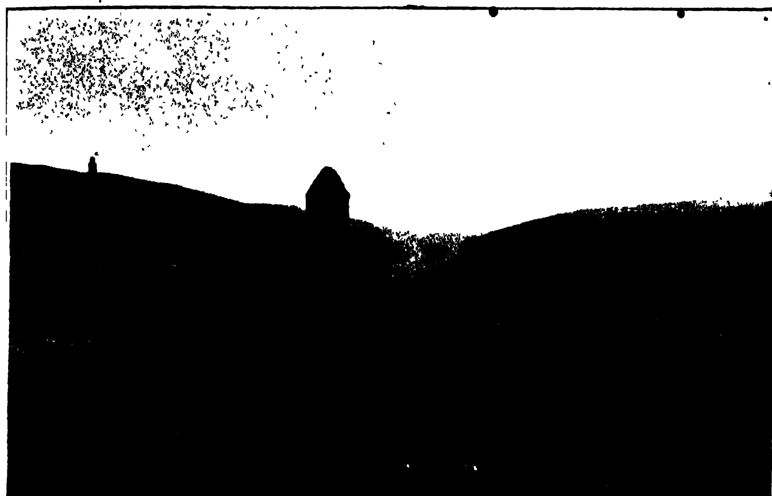


FIG. 94. KHOSHA VANK: CHAPELS IN THE RAVINE OF THE ARPA CHAI.

upon the opposite or left bank,[2] and is bordered on two sides by a loop of the river. The bridge has disappeared. A small village has grouped itself between the monastery and the bed of the stream, where repose beneath the gloom of lofty cliffs of lava the **two chapels** and the **tomb of King Ashot.**

The monastic buildings occupy a considerable area upon the high ground within the bend of the river. They are surrounded by a lofty wall. Entering from the west, we cross a court to an opposite doorway which opens into a vast and gloomy chamber (Fig. 95). On the further or eastern side of this chamber we perceive the door of the church. The architecture of this outer hall or *pronaos* is quite remarkable. In some respects it resembles that of the mosque at Ani. The ceilings are vaulted, and there are no less than four rows of pillars. The space is divided into the form of a nave and two aisles. The circumference of the pillars is

[1] See the Georgian annalist translated by Brosset (*Hist. de la Géorgie*).

[2] I should be sorry to have to swear to this statement.

9½ feet. The central vaulting of the nave is surmounted by a dome, different in shape from any of the domes which have been described. Viewed from the outside, it becomes merged in a tall belfry, which is seen on the left of my illustration (Fig. 96), taken from the south-west. To the interior it displays a drum of eight panels; and the only light which it transmits comes from above. The panels are of stone and covered with sculpture in low relief. Here it is an architectural figure, there a beautiful vine pattern which is the subject of the ornament. One space displays the form of the Virgin Mary, set in a rich frame. The two extremities of the frame are supported by the shapes of animals, a bull and a lion. On the back of the lion is seated an eagle, and a child on that of the bull. Two angels keep watch, one on either side of the Mother of Christ. The gloom of the building is due to the design of this dome, as well as to the smallness of the round windows, resembling the port-holes of a ship, of which there are three in the north and two in the south wall.

The interior of this edifice is covered with inscriptions in Armenian, which none of my party were able to read. Perhaps they include some of those which were brought by Abich from this cloister and which have been translated by Brosset.[1] One of these inscriptions records a donation in the Armenian year 650 (A.D. 1201) under the government of Zakarea. Another is to the effect that the monastery was restored in 110[illegible] (A.D. 1652) by one Daniel, a monk from Tigranocerta. We are told that the buildings had previously fallen into ruin, and had become polluted by accumulations of dust and filth. The cloister is styled Horomosi Vank, and is described as having been constructed by the kings. I will not venture to express an opinion upon the age of the *pronaos*; but I would suggest that the belfry is perhaps of later date. The sculptures in the dome appear to belong to a hoary antiquity. The edifice may have served as a model for a rock chamber which is described by a modern traveller as belonging to the cloister of Surb Geghard.[2]

You enter the church through the door in the east wall of the *pronaos*, passing a slab engraved with a pastoral staff, which marks the place of burial of some spiritual dignitary. A spacious dome rests upon four piers, and there is a single apse with the usual daïs. The walls are covered with a coating of whitewash. The interior measures roughly 53 feet by 33 feet, the former dimension including the apse. The attendant priest showed us an old but undated manuscript, which proved to be an illustrated New Testament. It would appear from an inscription that the church was dedicated to St. Gregory,[3] and it may perhaps be ascribed to the period of the kings.

The monastic buildings are placed upon the south of the church and

[1] *Voyage Arch.* livr. 1, rapp. 3, pp. 96, 107, 109-10.

[2] Telfer, *Crimea and Transcaucasia*, vol. i. p. 216. The chamber at Geghard is known as the Rusukna sanctuary, and was completed in A.D. 1288 (Arm. era 737) (*ibid.*).

[3] An inscription of A.D. 1215, much mutilated, seems to infer this (Brosset, *Voyage Arch.* loc. cit. p. 97).



Fig. 96. Khosha Vank: Exterior of Pronaos and Church from South-West.

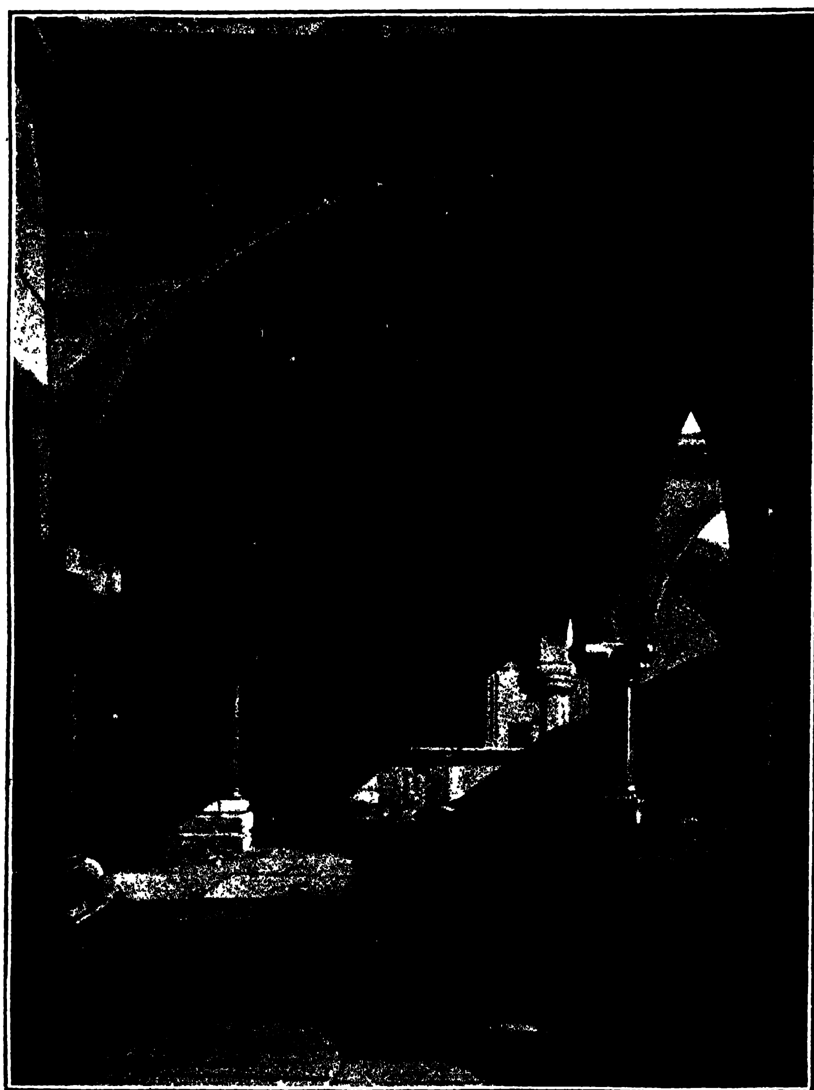


FIG. 97. KHOSHA VANK: HALL OF THE SYNOD.

pronaos, and are approached from the southern side of the entrance court. They are just outside the area embraced by my illustration of the south walls of the edifices just named. Two large apartments, communicating with one another, serve as antechambers to a great hall with pillars and vaulted ceilings, which is entered from the second of the two chambers, and in plan extends along the most easterly of its walls. The whole suite are impressive examples of the art of the mason and stone-sculptor, effect being gained by the regularity and perfect fitting of the blocks, while the stone takes an admirable surface. Friezes with stalactite patterns are employed in one room as a cornice for the ceiling. In the second and smaller room there is a square aperture in the centre of the roof with a stalactite ornament. The same feature belongs to the hall of the synod (Fig. 97), and is clearly seen in my photograph. At the further end of the two rows of pillars may be discerned a niche with a daïs, the recess being richly sculptured. It was there that was placed the throne. But I think these buildings are all later than the time of the kings, although they may have been used by the Georgian princes who governed Ani. We learn from an inscription, which was probably copied in the larger of the antechambers, that at least one of these apartments was constructed in A.D. 1229 to serve as a receptacle for the holy relics.[1]

On the north side of the church buildings there is nothing but a narrow and vacant space separating them from the wall of the cloister. But at the east end of this part of the enclosure, and in line with the east front of the church, are situated the roofless remains of a little chapel, crowning a ruinous substructure which is overgrown by rank weeds, and of which the sculptured stones litter the ground. The pendant of this building on the south side of the church is seen in my illustration (Fig. 96). It is much better preserved than the companion edifice, and the chamber in the lower storey is still intact. This chamber is oblong in shape, with a vaulted ceiling and an altar with sculptured stones. The chapel is of triple design, with three apses, the whole surmounted by a dome. It is possible that both these buildings, which so closely correspond, were designed to receive the remains of some high personages.

But the actual tomb of one of the kings has been spared by a happy chance, and may be found quite close to the second and larger of the chapels which repose in the bed of the Arpa Chai (Fig. 94). It is placed near the south-eastern angle of the building. With what a thrill of delight did we discover this eloquent relic—a rounded slab resting on two stone steps! In spite of the lichen and the wear of the stone, the words "Ashot Thagavor" (Ashot, the king) were distinctly legible. The chapels are placed in a line from west to east, and were originally three in number. Of these the most westerly is falling into ruin, a state which has already overtaken that on the east. The central member of the group is at once

[1] Brosset, *Voyage Arch.* loc. cit. p. 98. The dimensions of these various apartments are:—No. 1, length, 29 feet 4 inches; breadth, 29 feet; No. 2, 27 feet by 27 feet 2 inches; No. 3, hall of the synod, 18½ paces by 18 paces. The reader will note that the architects avoided exact squares. In this they were governed by a right instinct.

the largest and the best preserved. It contains an inscription over the south door to the effect that it was built in 460 (A.D. 1011) by one George, son of the patriarch Martiros. But I have not been able to identify this patriarch; and it is possible there may be some error in the translation made by my dragoman, who, although well educated, was not a scholar in old Armenian. The king whose name appears on the tomb is probably Ashot the Third.

The inscriptions establish the fact that the monastery was known by the name of Horomosi Vank, which probably signifies the convent of the Greek.[1] History supplements and explains this information. We learn from Asoghik that it was founded in the tenth century under the reign of Abas by Armenian priests who had emigrated from Greek territory. It was burnt by the Mussulmans in A.D. 982.[2] An inscription of King John Sembat, dated 487 (A.D. 1038), appears to have been found within its walls; and it has been inferred that the cloister was restored by that prince.[3] We know that he was buried by the side of his predecessors who ruled at Ani; and we have an inscription of John Sembat by which he bestows the revenue of a village in support of the royal cemetery at this monastery of Horomos.[4]

For the benefit of such of my readers whose leisure may be unequal to a perusal of this long description, I would single out for particular study the cathedral (Figs. 72 and 74), the church of St. Gregory (Figs. 76, 77, and 78), and the two polygonal chapels (Figs. 85 and 88). These monuments are examples of the Armenian style at its very best, before it was brought under the direct influence of Mussulman art and adopted with slight variations Mussulman models. Except in the case of the church of St. Gregory, we have authentic evidence that they are works of the kingly period. The merits of the style are the diversity of its resources, the elegance of the ornament in low relief, the perfect execution of every part. It combines many of the characteristics of Byzantine art and of the style which we term Gothic, and which at that date was still unborn. The conical roofs of the domes are a distinctive feature, as also are the purely Oriental niches. Texier is of opinion that the former of these features was carried into Central Europe by the colonies of emigrants from the city on the Arpa Chai.[5]

[1] Brosset, *Voyage Arch.* loc. cit. p. 99. Another derivation is from the Greek word for a priest, *ἱέρευς* (see M. Prudhomme, note to Aristakes, ch. ii.).

[2] Asoghik ap. Brosset (*Ruines d'Ani*, p. 137).

[3] *Ruines d'Ani*, p. 137.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 61.

[5] Texier (*op. cit.* p. 112):—"La façade de cette église (the cathedral) construite avec une simplicité remarquable . . . peut être regardée comme le type de l'architecture allemande du moyen âge. Il est facile d'expliquer comment, dans toute cette contrée, on retrouve le dôme à toit conique particulier à l'architecture arménienne. En effet,

In the portals of St. Gregory and of the church of the Apostles (Figs. 78 and 92) we have elaborate examples of the later period when the influence of Mussulman art was supreme. And the *pronaos* of Khosha Vank, with its massive pillars and groined ceilings, with the finely sculptured panels in the dome, seems to blend some of the characteristics of the architecture of the kings with the plainer style which belongs to the mosque.

But a lesson of wider import, transcending the sphere of the history of architecture, may be derived from a visit to the capital of the Bagratid dynasty, and from the study of the living evidence of a vanished civilisation which is lavished upon the traveller within her walls. Her monuments throw a strong light upon the character of the Armenian people, and they bring into pronouncement important features of Armenian history. They leave no doubt that this people may be included in the small number of races who have shown themselves susceptible of the highest culture. They exhibit the Armenians as able and sympathetic intermediaries between the civilisation of the Byzantine Empire, with its legacies from that of Rome, and the nations of the East. They testify to the tragic suddenness with which the development of the race was arrested at a time when they had attained a measure of political freedom, and when their capacities, thus favoured, were commencing to bear fruit. The Armenian architects thenceforward subserve the taste of their Mussulman masters; and during the long centuries which have elapsed since the Seljuk conquest, the genius of their countrymen has been exploited by the semi-barbarous peoples of Asia, while their abilities and character have progressively declined and become debased.

For all these reasons a special duty devolves upon the traveller to address a pressing appeal both to the Armenians and to the Russian Government for the preservation of these monuments. I have already mentioned the abstraction of two important bas-reliefs, and the petty thefts which are taking place with increasing frequency. Of the buildings observed by my predecessors within comparatively recent years, the octagonal minaret has already succumbed. A like fate will presently overtake the chapel of the Redeemer, unless measures be promptly taken to maintain that edifice. The monastery of Horomos is

après la prise d'Ani par les Mussulmans, un grand nombre de citoyens abandonnaient la ville. . . ."

falling into ruin. Rich Armenians spend vast sums upon the embellishment of Edgmiatsin; can none be found to conserve for the instruction of posterity the noblest examples of the genius of their race? The co-operation of the Russian Government should be secured in this laudable enterprise; nor need we despair that it will be forthcoming in such a cause. Much as that Government is inclined to discourage Armenian patriotism, it rarely omits to perform a service in the interests of culture when the appeal is general and the interests are clear.

CHAPTER XIX

KARS

WHILE Ani, the deserted stronghold and capital on the banks of the Arpa, appeals to the patriotism of Armenians, her neighbour Kars, that fortress at once of ancient and modern repute, awakens a feeling of national pride in the bosom of the English visitor. Few, indeed, of my countrymen have been privileged to gaze upon a site and scene which is associated in their memory with a most brilliant achievement of British officers. Of the sieges which Kars has sustained during the course of the present century only one has been conducted with any skill and spirit on the part of the defence. On that occasion a garrison of about fifteen thousand Turks resisted, under the strategy of an English general, a force of from thirty to forty thousand Russians for a period of over five months. The exploits of Williams and his companions in 1855 are still familiar to the townspeople. It is they who first traced the design of the fortifications, such as we see them at the present day. The old school of Russian officers still view with alarm or suspicion the approach of an Englishman to the neighbourhood of their prize. Kars is rigorously excluded from the jurisdiction of our consuls, and our travellers have rarely penetrated within her walls. On the other hand, the new school are of quite a different temper, and give free rein to the hospitable and amiable qualities which are natural to their race. They received me with open arms, overwhelmed me with attentions, and took pains to let me feel that, side by side with the Russian laurels, one in honour of their British opponents had not been allowed to fade.

I have already endeavoured to describe the characteristics of the site of Kars as you approach the fortress from the east across the plain. The plan which I now offer will at once

assist that description and supplement it with a view of the surrounding features. The volcanic mass which is pierced by the river where it projects into the level expanse is due to a local outbreak of basaltic lava, which is in orographical and, probably, in genetical connection with the volcanic water-parting between the Araxes and the Kur. The real boundary of these plains on the west and south-west is formed by the breaking away to the Pontic region of the uplands of the Soghanlu Dagh; and the low water-parting between the two great rivers extends from the northern extremity of the Soghanlu to the Kisir Dagh which confines Lake Chaldir on the west. Upon that line of intermediary elevation the principal points of eruption have been the Kabak Tepe or Kizilkaya (10,010 feet), and, further north, the Buga Tepe (8995 feet). Minor emissions of volcanic matter have issued from radial fissures, which may be traced back to these parent stems. In this manner we may connect the Ainalu Dagh, on the west of Kars, with Kabak Tepe; and, perhaps too, the local eruptions which have produced the rock of Kars with the system of the Ainalu.[1]

It is with a feeling of astonishment, which will not be diminished by better acquaintance, that the traveller surveys the site of the fortress. That impression will be derived not so much from the course of the river—although one would expect to see it flowing towards rather than from the south, the direction of the Araxes to which it is tributary—but rather from the phenomenon which attends its approach to the cliffs on the northern margin of the plain. It is seen for some distance following at the base of a low ridge which culminates further eastwards in the towering parapet behind the town. All of a sudden, when the obstacle becomes most pronounced, instead of indulging in an easy and not very lengthy bend and taking the rampart in flank, the wayward stream throws its waters at the face of the cliff and disappears in an almost invisible gorge. For a distance of about four miles, measured along its banks in the trough of the chasm, it cleaves the mass of gloomy rock; then issues into the plainer land on the north of the rampart, which it has isolated from the heights on the west. An insular mass of mountain, rendered impregnable on one side by the precipices which overhang the river, and easily defended on other sides—

[1] Abich, *Geologische Forschungen in den kaukasischen Ländern*, Vienna, 1882, part ii. pp. 47 *seq.* *Das Plateau von Kars.*

such a site must have been fortified from the earliest times, commanding as it does a wide area of fertile plains.

At the commencement of our era the district but not the town is described by Strabo under the name of Chorzene.[1] It is possible that the Chorsa or the Kolsa of Ptolemy occupied the position of the present Kars.[2] But it is not before the Middle Ages that we become apprised of its certain existence, when it is mentioned under its present name by the imperial author Constantine, and under that of Karutz by Armenian writers.[3] From both sources we learn that it was a capital of the Bagratid dynasty before the rise of Ani to the dignity of a royal residence. It was conferred by Ashot the Third (A.D. 951-977), the founder of the fortunes of Ani, upon his younger brother Mushegh together with the prerogatives of local kingship. The kinglets of Kars were submerged by the wave of Seljuk invasion; but the reigning prince contrived to appease the wrath of the conqueror of Ani, and to gain time for the cession of the principality to the Cæsars, which was effected in the year 1064 in exchange for a retreat in Asia Minor.[4] The Byzantines did not remain long in the possession of their prize, and it became incorporated in the empire of the Seljuks. Nor, so far as I am aware, was it recovered from the Mussulmans until its capture by the Russians under Marshal Paskevich in 1828. The Armenians, the Seljuks, and the Ottomans have all successively imprinted their stamp upon the town, such as it has come down to our times. The only noteworthy building is a church of the period of the Armenian kings; and the citadel and walls are in part due to the Armenians and in part to the Seljuks and the Ottomans.

The names Kars and Karutz are believed to be derived from the Georgian, in which language Kari signifies a gate. The fortress would be known in that tongue as Karis-Kholakhi, or the gate-town. It would seem to have been originally a stronghold of the Iberians, the ancestors of the Georgians of

[1] Strabo, xi. c. 528.

[2] Ptolemy, v. 13, pages 135 and 136 of the folio edition. The identification with one of these towns is generally assumed; but in view of the statement of Evliya, noted below, that in his time there existed three towns of this name, it cannot be regarded as certain.

[3] τὸ κάστρον τὸ Κάρς, Const. Porphyr. *De adm. imp.* cap. 44.

[4] See Chapter XVIII. p. 353 and p. 364; and Saint-Martin, *Mémoires sur l'Arménie*, vol. i. p. iii. Tsamentav was the name of the appanage received in exchange. It was situated in the Cilician Taurus.

the present day.[1] If this derivation be correct, we must suppose that the Kars near Marash in Asia Minor, which is mentioned by a writer of the seventeenth century, was named after the city in northern Armenia.[2] During the Bagratid period the province of Kars was called Vanand,[3] and the river Akhurean. This last name was also applied to the present Arpa Chai from the confluence with the river of Kars to its junction with the Araxes. These appellations have disappeared during the long spell of Mussulman rule, nor have they been revived by the Russians. I must not weary my reader with an attempt to follow the fortunes of Kars from the eleventh to the nineteenth century. But it may interest him to know that among its conquerors figure two great names, that of Timur in the fourteenth century and that of Shah Abbas in the seventeenth. Nadir Shah attempted in vain to effect its capture in 1744, although he brought up no less than sixteen large cannons and spared no pains to reduce the Ottoman garrison.[4] The memory of this failure and of that of the Russian general Nesvateff in 1807 had confirmed the Turks in the conviction that the place was impregnable when the army of Paskevich appeared beneath the walls.[5]

The appearance of the fortified town upon that historic occasion must have been much more imposing than at the present day. Mounting the hillside from the plain on the south, the walls and houses of black stone rose then as now to the very summit of the ridge. But instead of ruinous parapets, interrupted by wide breaches, a double wall with an interval of about 16 feet frowned out upon the advancing host. The inner rampart was defended by towers, the outer by bastions; and the whole circumference of the figure which enclosed the western portion of the insular rock measured 2555 yards. The height of the walls ranged between 14 and 28 feet, and they were from 3 to 5 feet thick.

[1] Koch, *Reise im pontischen Gebirge*, Weimar, 1846, p. 462.

[2] *Travels of Evliya*, translated by Von Hammer, vol. ii. p. 181. The passage runs: "Eight hours further to the east we reach the frontier fortress of the Ottomans, the castle of Karss. There are three towns of that name; one is in Silefka, the Karss of Karatashlik; the second the Karss of Mera'ash, and the last that of Dúdemán, which is the present one." I am ignorant of the locality assigned to the first mentioned.

[3] The name Vanand is said by Moses of Khorene (ii. 6) to be derived from that of the chieftain of a horde of Bulgarians who settled there. Now that Moses has been assigned to the eighth century of our era the statement need not surprise us.

[4] Von Hammer, *Geschichte des osm. Reiches*, vol. viii. p. 58.

[5] Uschakoff, *Geschichte der Feldzüge, 1828, 1829*, Leipzig, 1838, part i. p. 194.

At the north-west angle of the enclosure, and immediately overlooking the river, which winds at the foot of vertical cliffs, was placed the inner fortress or citadel—*Narin Kala*—consisting of not less than three fortified spaces of which the most westerly or innermost was the keep. It was built throughout of solid stone. For a considerable space on the side of the plain the outer wall of the city was flanked by a moat, communicating with a marsh. In the plain itself the suburb on the south, which has now been transfigured by the Russians and composes the modern town, was surrounded by walls and defended by towers. A fort had been erected on the horn of the Karadagh, beyond the smaller suburb of Bairam Pasha. On the left bank of the river the only work of importance appears to have been a quadrangular fort with towers at the angles, called *Temir Pasha*, and protecting the outlying houses on the margin of the stream.[1]

The Russian army approached from the side of Gümri, the present Alexandropol, and passed within sight of the walls to the banks of the river where they encamped near the village of Küchik Keui. Their number amounted to about seven thousand men, while the besieged counted about eleven thousand under arms. But Paskevich was allowed to occupy the high land on the left bank, and to direct his attack from the south-west as well as from the south. The fortified suburb, *Orta Kapi*, was stormed on one flank and the Karadagh on the other. The citadel capitulated on the same day, the fifth after the commencement of operations. Kars was restored to the Turks after the termination of this war, and was again besieged by the Russians in 1855. Four British officers were despatched by our own Government to direct the defence, and the garrison numbered some fourteen thousand infantry, fifteen hundred artillery, and a small body of cavalry. The enemy, under Muravieff, were more than double this strength; the advance was again made from the side of Gümri, and the Russian headquarters were established in the vicinity of the river, on the south-west of the town. But on this occasion the Russian general discovered that all the approaches had been protected by works, which covered a large area. Under the conditions of modern warfare Kars is most assailable from the heights on the west, which rise from no great elevation along the left bank of the river, until they reach

[1] Uschakoff, *op. cit.* i. pp. 191 *seq.*

imposing proportions just north of the site, on the further side of the chasm. There they form a plateau which must be higher than the rock of Kars, and which overlooks the ridge of that insular mass, the town itself being turned towards the plain. Once gain possession of this line of heights and the old town is at your mercy. Realising this fact, General Williams and his subordinates had erected a line of forts to bar the approach on this side. The principal work on the west was situated some two miles from the town, at the extremity of the higher levels in that direction. It was called Fort Takhmas or Tahmasp. Inside of that position, immediately covering the heights on the north, a string of fortifications was constructed on the plateau, commencing on the south-west with Fort Lake, the strongest of all, and terminating on the north-east in Fort Teesdale near the edge of the cliff, where the river has almost effected its passage through the gorge. While such was the disposition of the defences on the left bank, the protected area on the right bank, the side of the plain, was considerably extended. A line of breastworks, enclosing a wide rectangular space, was taken from the foot of the Karadagh on the east to the margin of the river on the west. At the angles of this enclosure stood the Karadagh fort on the north, and the forts of Hafiz Pasha and Kanly on the south. The point of junction with the river was defended by Fort Suwari, and breastworks and redoubts, placed upon commanding positions, joined these works of the plain to those upon the heights already described.[1]

With certain changes in name my reader can follow this disposition of the defences upon the plan at the commencement of the present chapter, which is founded upon plans made during the last Russo-Turkish war in 1877. The Russians have since added to the strength of the works and have vastly improved the communications between them. But they do not appear, so far as I was enabled to judge, to have materially altered their arrangement. The greater range of modern guns has perhaps already necessitated a further extension of outlying forts. The old citadel has sunk into insignificance; and the defence of the future will have to deal with a very large area, and will require many times as many men as in the past. How Williams with such a small force could have held out for five months against an

[1] Sandwith, *Narrative of the Siege of Kars*, London, 1856; Lake, *Kars and Our Captivity in Russia*, London, 1856.

organised army of twice his own strength is a question which I cannot answer with satisfaction to myself. His ultimate surrender was occasioned by starvation; but he had already repulsed, with enormous losses to the enemy, the main attack, which was directed against Fort Takhmas.[1] For the second time the victors were compelled at the peace to disgorge their prize, which they justly regarded as the outer bulwark of Erzerum and Asia Minor. Its permanent conquest was reserved for the war of 1877, when the Turks were left by England to their own resources, and when they practically gave it away to Loris Melikoff after the defeat at the Alaja Dagh.[2]

My hopes of being able to investigate this historical site reposed upon the high authority of the letters which I carried with me and upon the doubtful factor of the personality of the governor. To measure this uncertain quantity was my first object, and I set out to accomplish it in fitting style. An open landau, driven by a Russian coachman of the Molokan sect, conveyed me from the modern town in the plain along the right bank of the river and for some distance into the gorge. A metalled road follows that bank under the shadow of the precipice for the space of about half a mile. It ends at a little respite of even ground between the cliff and the water's edge. In former days there had been planted here a grove and a flower garden, which was known as the *paradise of Kars*. But, since the present governor appropriated the place to himself, and built upon it his private residence, it goes by the name of *paradise lost*. General Fadéeff is not exactly a popular personage—if, indeed, he may still be numbered among mortal men. His abode is far removed from their

[1] According to Sandwith (*op. cit.* p. 286) no less than 6300 Russians were buried by the besieged after the grand assault on Takhmas. Loris Melikoff informed the *Daily News* Correspondent in 1877 that during the operations of 1855, at which he himself had been present, the Russians lost more than 8000 men, killed or disabled.

[2] Loris Melikoff contented himself with making a strong demonstration against the forts on the left bank, and directed his main attack against the Karadagh and the forts in the plain. It was completely successful, having been undertaken at night. The Turks had concentrated their forces on the heights overlooking the left bank and might probably have gone on holding them after the capture of the town. But the Commander lost heart; the cunning Armenian who organised the victory left him an open door, and he took to his heels. I think one must regard these heights as practically impregnable, if held by a force well supplied with artillery, provisions, and water.

In 1877 the garrison was 26,000 strong, augmented to an even higher figure by the townsmen. The attacking force seems to have been about equal in number. Kars fell on the night of the 17th of November. See *Daily News Correspondence*, London, 1878; Norman, *Armenia and the Campaign of 1877*, London, n.d.; *Étude critique des opérations en Turquie d'Asie pendant la guerre en 1877-78 d'après des documents officiels*, par un officier supérieur Turc (Constantinople and Leipzic, 1896).

habitations, and I came to the conclusion that it concealed a mystery. I rang in vain several times at the door. At last I contrived to summon a very pretty young woman with a very sulky countenance. As she spoke both French and German, I contrived to win her to my side, and she promised she would enquire after the General. She returned with a set expression which I felt I could not assail. I did, however, succeed in making her smile, and that was something pleasant in itself. His Excellency was absent; it was not known where, nor by what time he would return. I enquired whether he made a practice of sleeping out. At last she relented into suggesting I might call in the evening; she would do what she could, but she was only a subordinate member of the household. She did not come to the door when I repeated my visit, and I received the same unsatisfactory answers. The vice-governor, General Petander, examined my papers at the seat of government, but pleaded that his authority was extremely limited. He could not say when the Governor would return to his house. I was glad to escape from him to the hospitable home of Colonel Rzewuski, in command of the Uman regiment of Cossacks of Kuban. I had accepted an invitation to dine with him and Madame Rzewuski; and the party consisted of a group of as amiable and charming people as it would be possible to meet. All had travelled and knew the world. The conversation was free, and ranged at ease over every topic, including the mysterious Governor. They were immensely entertained by my own experiences in that quarter, and they repaid me by narrating the gallant deeds of Fadéeff, who appears to have been instrumental in the conquest of Kars in 1877. But they left me in doubt whether he still existed in the flesh. I thought I detected a certain legendary phraseology in their remarks about him, from which a master of the higher criticism would easily be able to establish that they were not contemporary with the personage of whom they spoke.

My host was determined that I should not be blindfolded, and that I should see what might be seen without endangering the safety of Kars. His own aide-de-camp had recently returned from a visit to England, where he had been accorded facilities of a similar nature, and whence he brought back the most agreeable recollections. The deficiencies in our insular manners are in such cases outweighed in the mind of the visitor by the freedom of our life, the absence of suspicion against foreign

designs, and, above all, by the world-wide bond of sport. Never in the height of the hunting season at home have I listened to a more animated discussion of the relative merits of our *countries* and packs of foxhounds than after dinner in the company of these officers in this remote corner of Russian Asia. From hounds we passed to horses, and to an interesting experiment which had recently been made by the Colonel. It is well known that the Cossack horses are of great endurance; but they have little pace, and their shoulders are of the worst. My host had crossed one of his mares with the English thoroughbred, and had produced a colt of much promise which had only just been broken. If I did not object I should ride him on the morrow, when he would take me to have a peep at the fortifications on the heights. In spite of the twinkle in his eye when he spoke of the vivacity of the youngster, I felt that the opportunity was cheap at this price, and merely stipulated that I should be allowed my English saddle.

Very early on the following morning I sallied forth to the Colonel's residence, and was surprised to find a whole squadron of Cossack cavalry drawn up in the road. His aide-de-camp was conspicuous in a magnificent uniform, which set off his tall and graceful figure. The band of the regiment was mustered at its full strength; but these troops were only a portion of the effective, which numbered some eight or nine hundred horsemen. The remainder were distributed over the extensive tract of country between Akhaltsykh and the Turkish frontier at Sarikamish. An iron-grey charger, over 15 hands in height, was being paced to and fro before the door. He excited the admiration and the curiosity of the onlookers, having a long and elastic walk, and arching his neck to the hand of the groom instead of stolidly following where he was led. That *was* a horse, they were all saying—those of the country were ponies beside him, and, as for the mounts of the Cossacks, they looked mere dross by his side. My small and plain-flap saddle, which I recognised upon his back, brought out the points of his sloping shoulder and strong loins. A word from the aide-de-camp, and the squadron was brought to attention with the band at their head. When the Colonel emerged from the doorway a salute was exchanged, and when he had mounted, the march commenced and the band prepared to strike up. None too soon had I adjusted my stirrup leathers on the iron-grey, for at the first sound he bounded high into the air.

But he had plenty of room at the head of the regiment, where the Colonel beckoned me to ride by his side.

This was the second time I had ridden at the head of Cossacks; I mention the fact merely to justify the assertion that there can be few more inspiriting positions. One feels the peculiar quality of the material behind one; it is in the air and makes the pulse beat. There is no champing of bits and impatient curvetting; nor do the riders sit up in their saddles and look smart. They may be seen in every posture, lolling about in their shabby drab uniforms, and holding their reins long. But they communicate the impression that each man is a born soldier, and that one might march with them from one end of Asia to another without troubling much about the commissariat or the length of the particular stage. They are just the troops with which to traverse these vast plains. The long-backed horses are hardened to every kind of privation, and so are their owners, for every Cossack owns his mount. Where would you march? Say the word, and we go now.

On this occasion the proceedings were quite of a gala order. We passed through the main streets of the modern town upon the plain; and all the Karslis were there assembled to hear the inspiriting music and to pass remarks upon the foreigner on the grey horse. We wound along the side of the river, at the foot of the precipice crowned by the citadel, where a window in the walls of that airy edifice marks the spot whence the Turks were wont to precipitate spies. We crossed to the left bank by the lower of the two bridges, and followed along the chaussée upon that side. It is now the principal avenue of communication with Alexandropol; but it is destined to be replaced by a road which will pass to the south of the town, leaving this chaussée with its secrets for purely military use. The further we proceeded the loftier loomed the walls of the chasm, especially that upon our left hand. It rises almost vertically from the margin of the road to the edge of the plateau, some five hundred feet above the stream.

The heights on the left bank are here called by the name of Mukhliss, and such is their elevation that the buildings upon them—the military hospital and the redoubts—may be seen from the plain on the south of Kars, showing up behind the insular ridge against which the ancient town is built. Opposite the old citadel they are known as Vali Pasha, and, further west, as Takhmas. On the right bank the mass of rock which falls

abruptly to the river is styled Kars and Karadagh. We had arrived at a point whence the solitary house of the Governor could be clearly seen beyond the winding channel on that side. The choice was offered between two roads. The one we had been following pursued its course through the chasm; the other took advantage of some milder acclivities in the cliff to mount to the plateau above our heads. The forts upon the plateau are the interesting feature of modern Kars; the word was given to take the upper road. The Colonel and myself were still riding in front of the band, and could look back upon the long train of one of the finest of Cossack regiments defiling in half column up the incline. When we had reached a considerable elevation, all of a sudden a human figure springs into the road. It is a little gendarme, and he stands immovable in the centre of the road. The regiment is at once brought to a halt. The figure enquires whether there be a foreigner riding with them, and receives an affirmative reply. Then he points to an adjacent bifurcation of the road, one branch leading to the heights, and the other rejoining the chaussée at a point some distance down the stream. He directs us to take the latter way. The Colonel bites his lip, turns pale and obeys. We have come up all this distance, and now we are to go down. The ghost of General Fadéeff must be chuckling—if ghosts can chuckle—behind those windows in the speck of a house on the opposite bank!

It had been the plan of my kind host to cross the block of heights containing the forts, and thence to descend into the plain upon the north. A little Molokan village, called Blagodarnoe, is situated in the more level country on that side. A troop of his Cossacks was billeted within it, and it had been thought convenient to pay them a visit. The return journey would be made by way of the chaussée. There was now nothing for it but to proceed and to come home by the same route, since the little gendarme had given orders to this effect. We continued our passage through the chasm. I was impressed with the admirable communications which the Russians have established at great cost between the heights on either bank. Soon after regaining the main road we passed two opposite flights of steps, of which the one scaled the steep side of the plateau on the left, and the other that of the insular rock of Kars. Both were broad and perfectly maintained. The latter conducted from the water's edge to the Karadagh fort, now called Fort Fadéeff,

invisible on the further side of the ridge. And from the base of these steps a military road was carried slantwise towards the citadel. During the last siege the garrison suffered from the want of ready access to the outlying positions. This want has now been supplied. Troops can be moved with rapidity between the town and these positions as well as between the positions themselves.

The cliffs on either hand retain their elevation until you have reached the fourth military verst stone (over two and a half miles). Then they decline and become less rocky and steep. The formation on the right bank is continued into the distance in a low outline; that on the left already opens to plainer land at about the sixth stone (four miles). We now left the chaussée, and cantered over the plain, across which it was a pleasure to extend the iron-grey. He had all the makings of a very valuable horse.

Luncheon was served in one of the neat little houses of the Molokan village, and many a glass of white liqueur was consumed before the meal. On the way home there was a display of Cossack exercises, a succession of riders galloping past us in single file, and vaulting to the ground with one foot in the stirrup in full career. Or they placed their bodies parallel with the flanks of their horses, avoiding the arrows of their ancestors or the bullets of their contemporaries. Like Kurds and Circassians they raised wild shouts; but, unlike these, they never got out of hand. Last of all there was a race, conducted on strict principles, in which I cantered in, an easy winner, on the grey. The squadron then re-formed, and we retraced our steps through the chasm to the inspiriting music of the band. It soon ceased playing; and with the last strain, at first low, then gradually louder, a sad and mysterious chant broke from the ranks. It was carried like sobs into the recesses of the gorge, rising and falling like the sighing of the wind. What did they sing in that expression of bottomless misery? Their homes had been laid waste, their parents were no more, nor their horses any longer at tether or stall. Then the theme would change abruptly, and a note of triumph would be heard. Nowhere except in Hungary have I heard such moving music, giving utterance through the canons of Western harmony to the tempestuous motives of Eastern songs.

It remains to say a few words about the town of Kars, as

you see it at the present day. It is a mere shadow of its former self. The old fortress city on the side of the insular rock is scarcely better than a heap of ruins. The suburb on the plain—*Orta Kapi* of Mussulman times—is rapidly pushing it out of existence. This suburb contains the residences of the high officials and officers, and can boast of a new Russian church, at its southern extremity, and of a number of single-storeyed but spacious and well-supplied shops. The church displays the masonry of the grey stone found at Kars; but the bulk of the buildings have their walls painted white, and their roofing of sheet metal, coloured pink or a soft green. The aspect of this modern quarter, jutting out from the hill into the plain opposite the answering horn of the Karadagh on the east, presents a striking contrast to the uniform grey of the old city, overlooking the bay of the plain. The stone of the walls and of the old Armenian church have weathered almost black. But the majority of the ancient houses have disappeared, and the walled area is for the most part covered with rubble and ruin, or with straggling hovels, resembling those of a village. The citadel was blown up by the Russians prior to their evacuation at the close of the Crimean War,[1] and has been rebuilt in a softer and yellow stone (Fig. 98). It now forms a most admirable target for artillery, being the only patch of brighter colour on a ground of the sombrest hue. The population of city and suburbs is censused at not more than 4000, of course excluding the garrison. Of these 2500 are Armenians and only some 850 are Turks. The Russians, including Molokans, number 250, and the Greeks over 300 souls. It is true that the total might perhaps be doubled if there were included in it those families who are allowed to reside here on sufferance, prior to being settled elsewhere. Kars is constantly receiving refugees from the Turkish provinces, flying before the excesses of the Kurds.

Still the number of the inhabitants has grown smaller and smaller, if we even confine ourselves to the present century. Prior to the campaign of Paskevich, we are informed by a credible authority that Kars with its suburbs contained some 10,000 families, or from 50,000 to 60,000 souls.[2] After it was evacuated by the Russian army upon the close of that war, the bulk of the Armenian population deserted their homes and followed the

[1] Ussher, *Journey from London to Persepolis*, London, 1865, p. 238.
[2] Ker Porter (1819), *Travels*, etc., vol. ii. p. 648.

be room for their favourite boulevards, although trees are rare at present in Kars. The fortifications will year by year be extended over a larger area, the neighbourhood being sown with volcanic eminences admirably adapted both for the attack and for the defence.

The Armenian inhabitants have a single elementary school, or, rather, one for boys and one for girls. It is housed in the buildings adjacent to the little church of St. Mary, under the citadel at the western extremity of the rock. The teachers simply cowered with fear during my visit. The Russian school dispenses a somewhat higher standard of education, and profits by the disabilities imposed upon its rival. I was shown specimens of the Easter cards which each child had received this year from inmates of schools in France. The little French boy sends some poetry translated into Russian to his Russian contemporary. The girls here received similar presents from French girls. It would appear as if no Russian school within the limits of the Empire had been passed over by the organisers of an act of demonstrative patriotism which, let us hope, is not spontaneous with the young.

CHAPTER XX

ACROSS THE SPINE OF ARMENIA

THE long and lofty barrier of the Ararat system affords a natural partition of the surface of the Armenian highlands, and, corresponding with the frontier between the Russian and the Turkish empires, divides Armenia into two. The fairest districts of either territory are found on their southern confines; and what the valley of the Araxes is to the Russian provinces, that is to those under Turkish rule the country of Van. Van, with her famous lake and immemorial antiquity, became the next, and not the least alluring objective of the journey which we had planned. A new world lay on the further side of the mountains towards which we now directed our course.

October 22.—During our stay in Kars we had experienced the first spell of cold, bleak weather that the coming winter held in store. On the day of departure the district was visited by a storm of rain which delayed us until afternoon. At a few minutes after one o'clock we were crossing the bridge which spans the river, and taking a last view of the castle and the gorge. Above the entrance to the cleft the stream flows between humbler slopes; but they are still of rock, and the metalled road, which follows the western shore at no great distance, is without a prospect on either side. A few versts are covered among such cheerless surroundings; then the river comes towards you through a nice tract of flat pasture land which opens out upon the right bank. The meadows, brown of hue after the heats of summer, were seen to extend to the cultivated skirts of a hill range, some six miles distant, at the foot of which we were shown the village of Azat. A second settlement, Little Tikma, was nearer to us, in the same direction; and on our side of the water a group of low stone houses were aligned upon the road. We were surprised to hear

the German tongue and the mournful sounds of a concertina; the dress, the hymn reminded us that the day was Sunday; and the simple people were delighted to converse with a son of Protestant England in the language of their fatherland. They told me that it was two years since they had left the colony at Tiflis, and migrated to these distant wilds. The soil was rich, and it only needed a small expense of capital to diffuse the river over the adjacent plain. But whence could they draw the money for works of this nature? They harvested their corn in the month of August, but the crops suffered from want of water. Although they possessed no school, they were not without the rudiments of learning; their frank, intelligent faces were a pleasure to see. Petrovka is the name of their settlement, which contains some forty houses. A few versts further we entered the Russian colony of Vladikars. We were crossing an open country which stretched away on either hand to the outlines of low hills. Several of these Russian villages were visible in the landscape, and the brown loam had been exposed by the plough.

Vladikars bears a strong resemblance to Gorelovka—the same white faces and little windows of the neat stone houses, ranged at intervals on either side of the road. The inhabitants, too, display a family likeness to the dwellers in the northern watershed—the men with their lank figures and dull but honest faces, the women with their broad shoulders and massive hips. The feminine members of the colony were especially conspicuous—strapping wenches, as one might call them, attired in the gayest of printed cottons and exhibiting a plainness which was almost repulsive. I entered the oblong and single-storeyed building in which they conduct their services of prayer. A wooden bench along the walls, a few wooden chairs were its only furniture; you saw no pulpit or altar or religious picture; God resided in the living objects of His love. This village as well as its neighbours are peopled by Molokans, a sect of which the doctrine, like that of the Dukhobortsy, represents an extreme and a logical form of the Protestant faith. An old man to whom I turned, and whose striking features I was able to record (Fig. 99), spoke to me with much charm of voice and manner concerning their religious beliefs. They reverence Moses and the prophets and the Holy Gospel, but they practise their religion in their own way. Singing psalms appears to be their principal method of spiritual expression. Infants are not baptized, but are brought to this building; a

passage from the New Testament is read in the child's presence and his name is publicly declared. A similar ceremony consecrates the marriage tie.

A little beyond this village—in which is placed the eleventh verst stone—the road bifurcates. The well-metalled and well-maintained *chaussée*, which we had been following, pursues its course to the confines of the Turkish frontier at the station of Sarikamish. The other branch—which is in places a road, but more often a simple track—stretches off towards the south. Taking the latter direction, we drove for some distance over even ground, where here and there the rich, brown soil had been exposed by the plough. On our left hand rose a grassy and hummock-shaped eminence, scarcely a mile away. Hill ranges of similar appearance circled around us, their summits capped with lowering clouds and strewn with fresh snow. In such surroundings the gay houses of Novo-Michaelovka were a pleasing diversion for the eye. The elaborate fretwork of wooden gables and shutters, the lavish display of vermilion and cobalt, lent an air of festivity to the place (Fig. 100). It was evident that the inhabitants were extremely well-to-do; yet, like all these sectaries, they neither possessed nor appeared to desire a school in which to educate their young. Near this



FIG. 99. MOLOKAN ELDER AT VLADIKARS.

village we had again approached the banks of the river, which had a width of some 20 yards. We now crossed to the right bank.

On our point of course, a little to our left, we held a bold and lofty hill, of which the outline assumes the appearance of two humps. It bears the name of Akh Deve or the white camel; and one can understand how appropriate would be this appellation during the winter months. Snow had not yet rested upon its grassy convexities, which still wore the ochreous hues

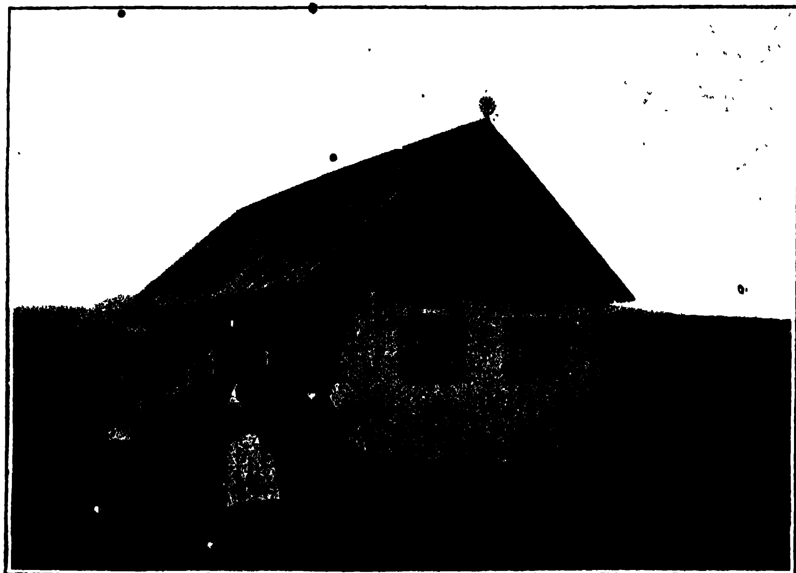


FIG. 100. HOUSE AT NOVO-MICHAELOVKA.

of autumn, and were flushed in places by a detritus of red, volcanic stone. After losing all prospect for the space of some twenty minutes, during which we crossed a bleak side valley of the sluggish river, and a stream which winds along the base of rocky slopes, we again opened this landmark on the further rim of the amphitheatre, close by the village and station of Chermaly. The post house stands at a little distance from this Armenian village; our tired horses were replaced by a fresh team of four, having covered a stage of 23 versts or 15 miles.

It was half-past four o'clock; we made our way over lofty uplands, of which the moist loam held our carriage-wheels. Or we jolted upon large boulders, embedded in the track. Away

on our right rose the slopes of the Akh Deve. Magnificent eagles, with their square shoulders and long plumage, circled round us or observed us from adjacent rocks. We were not long in discovering the bait of this assemblage—the mangled remains of a horse. In three-quarters of an hour we had reached the skirts of the hill mass, whence we commanded an unbroken view towards the north. Vast tracts of idle soil extended to the horizon, except where, here and there, the yellow herbage was interrupted by little carpets of ploughed land. Hills, which appeared little better than hummocks, were set at random in the expanse. Their summits were streaked with snow; from the white linings of their satellite clouds vague lights descended upon the plain. We were standing upon the elevated but imperceptible water-parting between the Araxes and the river of Kars. A gradual descent of some 500 feet brought us to the considerable village of Kemurly, where we passed the night in the posting house. It was the first settlement which we had seen during a stage of 20 versts, or a little over 13 miles.

The latter portion of the drive from the Akh Deve to the village had been performed under the shadow of night. It was only on the following morning—which broke serene and radiant—that we were able to realise the great significance of our position in a geographical sense. The even ground over which we had travelled from the banks of the Arpa to Kars, from Kars to the southward-flowing streams, does not descend, as one might expect, to the valley of the Araxes through a series of gradual inclines. The transition is effected by an exactly opposite process; the plain continues to rise until it has almost reached the latitude of the river, then suddenly breaks away, and overhangs the valley in a long line of gigantic cliffs. These cliffs extend for miles along the left bank of the Araxes; and it has been ascertained that for a space of over 30 miles they maintain about the same elevation, namely, a height of 6400 feet above the sea, and of 2000 to 2500 feet above the river.[1] They may in fact be regarded as forming the rim of an extensive plateau, which commences at the confluence of the Arpa with the Araxes, and stretches westwards, unbroken by any considerable mountain barrier, along the narrows above Kagyzman, and along the broad

[1] Abich, *Geologische Forschungen in kaukasischen Ländern*, Vienna, 1882, vol. ii. p. 145, and Map I. He measures from the western foot of the Ala Dagh below the village of Kalabashi in an easterly direction. See also his various measurements (*ibid.* pp. 376, 377).

depression of Pasin to the very threshold of the plain of Erzerum. Their peculiar boldness in the neighbourhood of Kagyzman may in part be attributed to the lavas which have issued in considerable volume from centres of emission along their edge. These eruptive centres, long since dormant, are seen in the shape of low convexities, stretching inwards from the brink of the cliff.

There is seldom wanting to such formations a natural pass or opening, through which the communications with the lower levels flow. Our road availed itself of a deep and gulf-like inlet

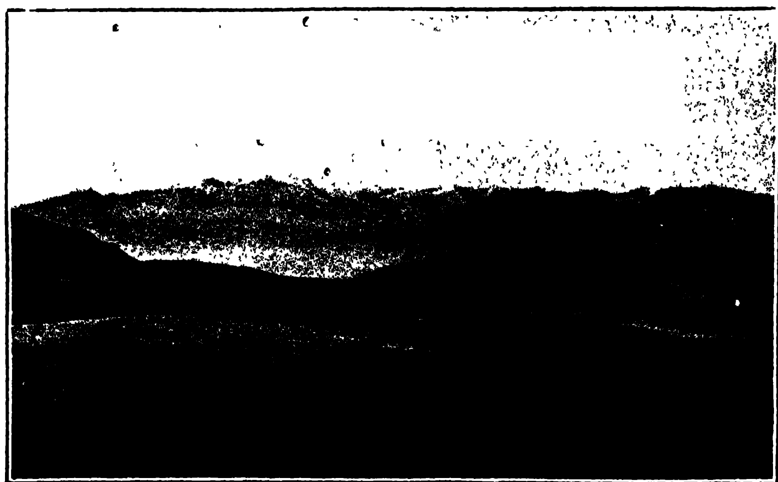


FIG. 101. AGHRI DAGH FROM THE ARAXES CAÑON.

in the rim of the plateau. The descent along this avenue was comparatively long and gradual, commencing indeed above the village—which has an elevation of some 6500 feet[1]—and ending in the neighbourhood of the Lower Kemurly. Measured on the map from point to point, the distance between the two settlements is about 6½ miles. The road was carried along the slopes through an infinitude of windings, which measured 18 versts or 12 miles.

It was not yet eight o'clock when we proceeded in our carriage down the easy gradients of this descent. Beyond a foreground which was choked by a succession of shelving convexities rose the crags and peaks of the Ararat system—that long range to which in a collective sense this name may not be inapplicable, and which, like Ararat, is known to the inhabitants of these districts

[1] By my own instruments.

under the name of Aghri Dagh. Aghri Dagh! These words, with their roughness on the palate, are just as appropriate to express the ruggedness of the barrier which we were fronting, as they are unsuited to reflect the harmony of the giant in the east. The eye, already accustomed to the vaulted eminences of the tableland, is impressed by the contrast of these sharp, precipitous shapes. It seems some invasion of the border ranges into the area of the great plateaux. The sun was touching the summits of the chain, which were softened by a covering of fresh snow. But the underlying rock still asserted its essential character,

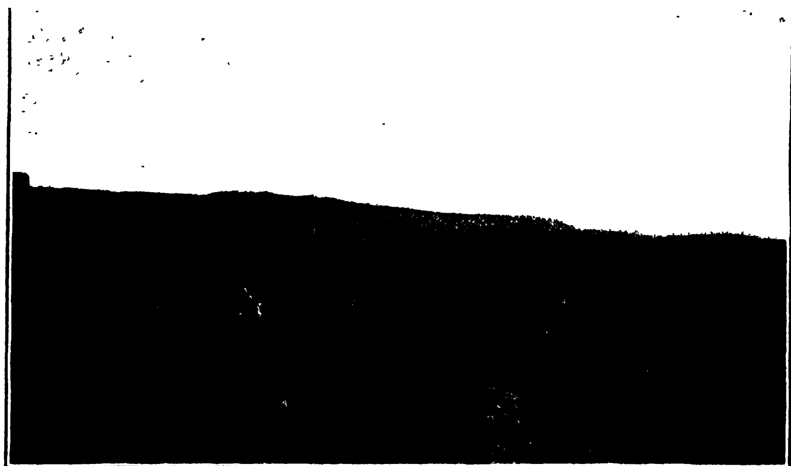


FIG. 102. CLIFFS COMPOSING NORTHERN WALL OF ARAXES CAÑON.

moulding the snow into an infinite number of facets, which sparkled in the light (Fig. 101). The northern wall of the valley —the heights we were leaving behind us—is composed by the lofty cliffs already described. Their even outline was drawn across the sky into invisible limits, as we made our way over the broken ground to which they decline (Fig. 102).

Marls and sandstone had taken the place of the layers of volcanic matter; far and wide, the slopes about us were broken into hummock shapes, tinged with delicate yellows and pinks. The only vestige of wood were some low trees and bush, seen on the lower tiers of the opposite mountains in the far west. Again we opened out the distant outline of Ararat, beyond the dark peak of Takjaltu. The Araxes was long invisible; when at length we overlooked the narrow floor of the valley, the river resembled a

slender white thread. Kagyzman was distinguished on the first of the slopes which faced us—an oasis of verdure and some faint blue smoke. We felt the power of a southern sun; and, as we neared the end of the descent, bouquets of atraphaxis, with succulent flowers and blaze of madder, clothed the waste and sandy soil. At twenty minutes before ten we were at the Lower Kemurly; and, a little later, our wheels were cleaving the shallow waters of the Araxes, spread in a wide bed of silt and shingle, over which a rapid current flows (Fig. 103). The ground rises



FIG. 103. THE ARAXES NEAR KAGYZMAN.

from the opposite margin of the river up the beautiful side valley of Kagyzman. The town is situated at an elevation of some 700 feet above the ford, which crosses a hollow of nearly 4000 feet above the sea.[1]

[1] The bed of the river at the ford has an elevation of 3900 feet according to my barometers. Abich's readings are as follows :—Bank of the river below the village of Changly, above Kagyzman, 3932 feet ; below the village of Kers, below Kagyzman, 3671 feet. The elevation of Kagyzman is 4621 feet. Evliya, who travelled in the middle of the seventeenth centnry, furnishes the following account of the place :—

"The castle of Kaghzemán being situated on the Kiblah side of the Aras is reckoned to be on the frontier of Azerbeiján, but belongs to the Ottoman government of Karss. It is named after its builder, one of the daughters of Núshirván. It was taken out of the hands of Uzún Hassan by Sháh Ismail, and then submitted to Sultán Súleimán. It is the seat of a Sanjak Beg whose khass amounts to 200,000 aspers, 9 ziámets, 178 timárs: 900 feudal militia, a judge appointed with 150 aspers, and a garrison of 300 men, who are paid by the impost on salt; the salt mines, and a quarry of mill-stones, are on the

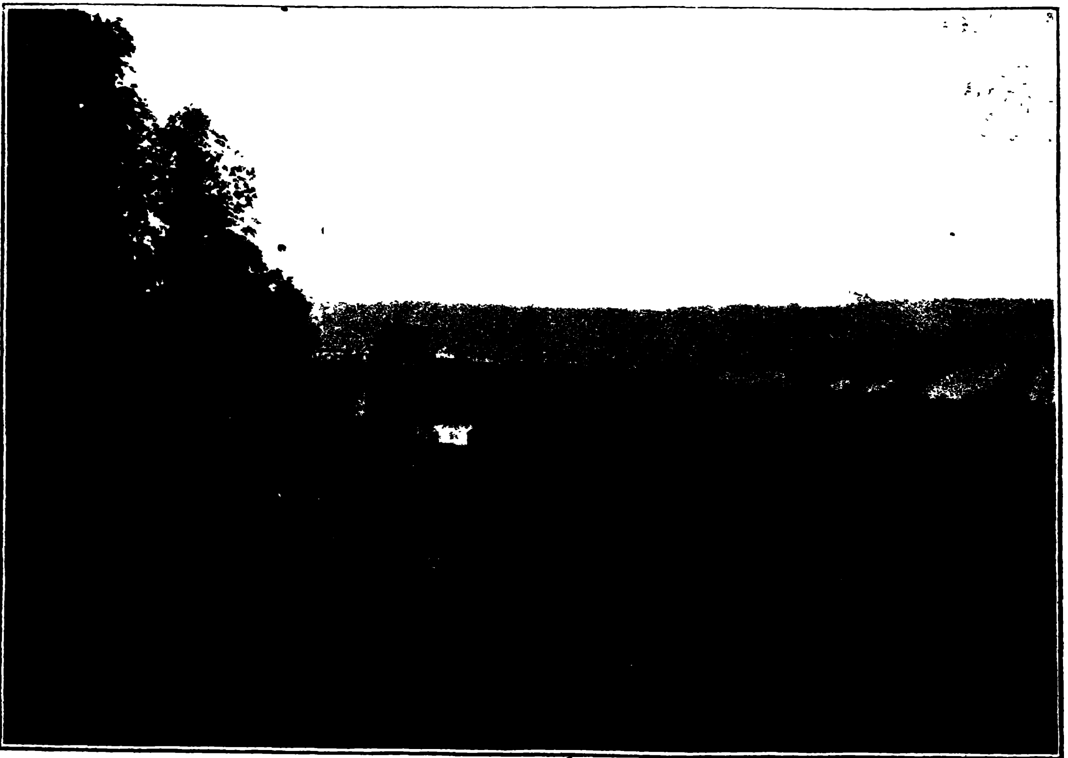


Fig. 104. Looking down the Valley of Kagyzman.

The houses nestle among lofty trees, on the left or western bank of a broad depression, which harbours in its deep and wooded recesses a scanty affluent of the Araxes. The soft tracery and mellow tints of the luxuriant foliage are backed by the rugged sides of the Ararat system; while, in the north, the eye follows the horizontal edge of the tableland, with the low volcanic eminences protruding above that outline, and robed, this morning, in fresh snow (Fig. 104). The inhabitants of this little paradise are Armenians and Mohammedans, the latter of whom belong to the Sunni persuasion and are classed in the Russian census as Turks.[1] A strong detachment of Cossacks was quartered in the place—a significant outpost of the northern empire. I was anxious to cross the mountains on the following morning; and it was painful to realise that we were at the mercy of the civil authorities—of a sour-faced Nachalnik who had no doubt received his instructions, but in what sense remained to be seen. Had Fadéeff hardened his heart? Had the order come to arrest us? The question remained for some time in suspense. The route which we were taking excited suspicion; with what object were we pursuing this unbeaten track? There were not wanting practical difficulties which might excuse the authorities, should they decide to detain us at Kagyzman. We were in need of transport; to purchase suitable animals was next to impossible; and, as for hiring, the owners were not accustomed to cross the frontier, and might reasonably apprehend detention on the other side. Indeed we failed in all our efforts to induce them to make a contract; and we were brought to recognise that it would be necessary to abandon our intention, unless the Nachalnik would

west side of the castle. The mill-stones of Persia and Rúm come from Kaghzemán; the borax of the goldsmiths, barbers' whetting-stones, and the common whetting-stones are extracted from the mines of Kaghzemán; in two places gold and silver are found, but as the product was exceeded by the expences they were abandoned; there are altogether 11 mines. The castle is a square strong building standing on a hill on the bank of the Aras; there are 700 small houses; it is not a commercial town (Bender), but a frontier town (Serhadd). Mount Aghrí, which appears to the west, is one of the most praiseworthy mountains in the world; it is near the town, and is the summer abode (Yaila) of Turcomans. The air is temperate and allows of the cultivation of gardens on some spots; the inhabitants are mild and some of them fair. The Levend troops (irregular levies) sing Persian songs with harmonious voices. As soon as I entered the town the Diván assembled, and notwithstanding the repeated oaths of the members of it, that they had not molested the Persian caraván, but only taken their custom duties, I took seven Aghás of them with me to prove the truth of what they said, by their presence at Erzerúm, whereunto I returned" (*The Travels of Evliya, translated from the Turkish by Von Hammer*, London, 1850, vol. i. p. 183).

[1] According to the official statistics the population amounts to 3435 souls, of whom the Armenians number 1709 and the Turks 1578.

intervene. By dint of much persistence and some cajolery we were able to bring him round. He of course protested that Oriental methods were out of place in Russia; we approved the sentiment, and expressed the hope that something would be devised to take their place. The owners were given their orders to appear before dawn on the following day. I rose at four, certain that they would not obey. But there was still a hope that we might create the necessary quantity of initiative by rousing the Nachalnik from his sleep. This plan, based, as the reader knows, upon former experiences, was productive of instant success.

By half-past seven our tiny caravan was in motion, pointing along the base of the mountains a little south of west. We sank by a steep incline to a long valley which follows the Araxes in the relation, as it appeared to us, of a parallel trough. It was filled with hummocks of a red, sandy substance; the slopes on either side screened off the view. Those on our left hand were the more stony, and were tinged in places a greenish hue. In about an hour after starting we opened out the river, flowing at some little distance from the heights upon which we stood. A lateral depression afforded access to the principal valley, which we followed, keeping to the high ground. The Araxes was threading the narrow bottom of a fork, of which the arms rose to thousands of feet above its bed. Close up now, on our left hand, towered the escarpments of the range, fronting the opposite cliffs of the tableland. At a little before nine we turned our backs to the river and rose, on a southerly course, up the mountain side.

We had reached an elevation of some 5500 feet, when a little village, with a few willows and the ruins of an ancient monastery, broke upon our view (Fig. 105). It is inhabited by Armenians, and bears the name of Kara Vank (the black cloister). The even masonry of hewn stone which composed the crumbling edifice recalled the culture of a forgotten age. What a contrast it presented to the rude and featureless walls of the modern village church! We passed through this little settlement, which contains some thirty houses, and mounted the slopes on the further side. In a valley on our left hand we noticed some sparse brushwood, and bushes of wild rose here and there relieved the rock. We were nearing the level of the opposite edge of the tableland, of which the cliffs were seen descending to the narrow river valley with shelving sides of richly modelled marls. At a quarter

before ten we made halt on the neck of a spur, whence we obtained a wide prospect over the more distant scene.

We overlooked the surface of the tableland. Towards the east, the mass of Alagöz could be distinguished from banks of cloud, which clung to the recent snows upon its slopes. Kagyzman was still visible in the trough of the landscape; the two low cones on the cliffs beyond the town were especially prominent, enveloped in a sheet of unbroken snow. Our people identified them with the great and the small Jagluya, and said they were



FIG. 105. KARA VANK ON AGHRI DAGH.

famous for their rich pasture-land. From east to west, in a wide half-circle, land and cloud were woven together, the horizontal outlines always felt and sometimes seen. But in the west these nebulous shapes met the profile of the savage ridges which were seen descending from the range about us, almost at right angles, into the narrows through which the river flows.

From this point we continued during a considerable space of time to skirt these upper slopes. The keen air was full of sun; the prospect was inspiring; we loitered for an hour over our lunch. I focussed the camera upon one of the long meridional parapets which cleave the soft landscape of the west (Fig. 106). I would ask my reader to observe the deep incision of its flanking

valley; these valleys extend to the very spine of the mountain system, and, in some places, appear to break it through. We were obliged to descend to the bottom of this particular ravine; a slender stream was rustling over the boulders in the hollow, which had an elevation of some 5800 feet. The rocky escarpments of the opposite parapet were seen to consist of a compound diabase, veined in places with beautiful marbles. Of wood there was little, even within these recesses—a brushwood of beech and willow and fir. The rose bushes were still with us, and the yellow immortelles, which we had not seen since our sojourn on Ararat.

Beyond this valley we rose towards the summits of the chain and made our way through this winter's snow. We were on the pass at four o'clock (Fig. 107); a grass-grown eminence on our right hand was identified as the Akh Bulakh Dagh. The range was highest on our left; the saddle by which we crossed it has an elevation of some 8600 feet. Half an hour later we had passed into the opposite watershed, and planted our feet upon Turkish soil.

Vast plains lay below us—dim tracts of even soil, broken in places by hummock shapes. The outline of an opposite chain was drawn across the horizon, loftier in the east, where it was crowned with snow, declining in the west to a range of blue-grey hills upon our right. It was the system of the Ala Dagh. Beyond this barrier, the harmonious shape of a single mountain formed a beautiful white presence in the sky. We could not doubt that it was Sipan, nearly seventy miles distant, the goal to which we were directing our steps. A thread of water on the plains reflected the blue heaven, and was recognised as the Murad. We had crossed the spine of Armenia, and were descending to the banks of the Euphrates, to the sources of the streams which issue into the Persian Gulf.



FIG PA OVER AGHRI DAGH

CHAPTER XXI

GEOGRAPHICAL

In the present chapter I shall invite my reader to make good his advantage over the traveller, and to realise, before proceeding further with the journey, the true meaning and wider connection of those natural features which have composed the landscape day by day. At the same time I shall endeavour to trace the limits of north-eastern or Russian Armenia, extending our view for awhile to comprise the whole of Armenia, and again narrowing it to the area of the Russian provinces.

But at the outset we are prompted to examine the conception so vaguely expressed by the metaphors of tableland and frame of mountain ranges which, with slight variations in the figure, have in the foregoing pages so often been employed. The pursuit of this analysis carries us beyond the sphere of our particular survey, compelling us to consider the structure of Asia as a whole.

From the Mediterranean to the Pacific the Asiatic continent is traversed by a zone of elevated country, which, flanked on the north and south by great chains of mountains, breaks off on the west to the Ægean Sea and to the lowlands of China on the east. Extensive areas of land with considerably lesser altitude are outspread on either side of this gigantic system: in the north the plains of Russia and Siberia, in the south the peninsulas of Arabia and India. The mountain chains which confine the zone of elevated country have been reared during different geological periods; yet they are subject to common laws. They are disposed in extensive arcs, of greater or lesser curvature, which are festooned across the continent on either side of the plateau region with a general direction from east to west. The plateau region is in general synclinal or, in other words, of slightly

hollow surface, and, in comparison with the flanking ranges, is flat.

If we enquire of the geologist the origin of these phenomena, we receive an answer which, while it leaves many points obscure and doubtful, still enables us to trace the operation of fixed principles in the mighty work unfolded before our eyes. Our globe sails through the wan expanse of æther, diffusing the heat with which it is charged. The cooling crust shrinks and gathers inwards towards the centre; but the material of which it consists is inelastic and is thrown into gigantic wrinkles or folds. Radial contraction induces tangential stresses at the surface, colossal forces which bend over and invert the folds, and even thrust the strata one beneath another, causing them to be disposed like the tiles upon a roof. This lateral tension finds most relief where the crust is weakest; and it is at such points, or along such zones, that the process of mountain-making has been developed on the largest scale. It is the tendency of such folded ranges to form arcs of large curvature, which are drawn inwards, where the lateral pressure meets with most resistance, and expand outwards, where it is withstood in a lesser degree.

In Asia the operation of this process of mountain-making has been accompanied by, or has produced, the elevation in mass of large portions of the earth's crust. The intensely folded regions, or, in other words, the great chains of mountains, are found along the inner and the outer margins of the elevated mass. Between these zones the stratified rocks have no doubt been subjected to the folding process; yet they have escaped the immense contortions that have taken place on either side.

Throughout the continent the lateral force which has been most operative in mountain-making has proceeded from the north. The fact may perhaps be explained by supposing that this force is the result of the active pressure exerted by the hard, unyielding material of which the steppes of Siberia and the basin of the Arctic Ocean are composed. The great arcs which are described by the mountain ranges are in general convex to the south. Thus in western Asia the chains on the inner and outer margins of the elevated area are disposed in two roughly parallel series of arcs bulging towards the south. Of these series the inner arcs have less curvature than the outer, to which they are roughly parallel.

The inner series may be traced with greatest singleness of

feature on the west of Hindu Kush—that natural centre of the mountain systems of Asia which at once supplies the most convenient standpoint for a general survey of the structure of the continent, and is placed at the junction of the two great divisions, western and eastern, into which geographers have partitioned this vast area. The Hindu Kush inclines over into the Paropamisus; and the southern portion of the latter range is continued, on the north of Persia, by the mountains of Khorasan. A sharp bend in the belt, just east of the Caspian, turns southwards into the Elburz range, and the beautiful curve of the chain along the margin of the shore may be admired from the waters of that inland sea. The line of Elburz is protracted across the depression of the Araxes valley into the peaks of Karabagh; while the Karabagh system unites with the bold and lofty ridges which in full face of their gigantic neighbour, the Caucasus, overtower the right bank of the Kur. These ridges again connect with the chain we have ourselves crossed between Kutais and Akhaltsykh—a chain which joins the mountains on the southern shore of the Black Sea. The Pontic range forms a bow of wide span and gentle curvature, ending in the hump of Anatolia, where it meets the arc of the Bithynian border hills.

The parallel series on the outer margin of the elevated area commences with the outer arc of the Hindu Kush system, the severely bent and S-shaped Salt Range. Thence it proceeds into the mountains which flank Persia upon the east and belong to the outer Iranian arc.[1] The bold sweep of this arc into the chain of Zagros may be recognised by a glance at the map. We remark the greater protraction of the north-western arm of the bow, a feature which may be traced in the configuration of most of the great Asiatic chains. We admire the clean and uniform outline of the curve, broken only by a slight indent at the straits of Ormuz, which may be answered by the bend in the inner system which we have already noticed on the east of the Caspian Sea. The outer Iranian arc effects a junction with the Tauric ranges along two parallel but fairly distinct orographical lines. Of these the inner line crosses over from the Zagros to the Ararat system, and assumes commanding orographical importance in the western arm of that system, known as the Aghri or Shatin Dagh. It is in the Shatin Dagh

1 Suess makes the outer Iranian arc commence at Tank, near Dereh Ismail Khan on the Indus (*Das Antlitz der Erde*, Leipzig, 1885, vol. ii. p. 552).

that the bend to the west-south-west is effected, which may be followed through a series of volcanoes into the Anti-Taurus and the Mediterranean range. The outer line is formed by the grand half-circle of the Kurdish mountains; from the parched plains about Diarbekr you see them, as from the well of an amphitheatre, covered or capped with gleaming snow. This principal chain of Taurus extends to the coast of Syria, and emerges from the sea in the island of Cyprus and in many a headland and island of the Anatolian coast.

It can scarcely fail to impress the most casual of observers that this double series of arcs, from Hindu Kush to Mediterranean, meet or almost meet at three distinctly traceable and widely separated points. Such approximations occur in Hindu Kush, in Armenia, and in the mountainous districts which border the Ionian seaboard. We can scarcely doubt that they are due to the incidence of a strong opposing force, moving from the south and causing the arcs to be constricted, the ranges to be piled up one behind another, and mountain development to assume its grandest forms. It is probable that the resisting pressure has been furnished in the first two cases by the Indian and Arabian peninsulas. Another feature, less obvious but not less noteworthy, is furnished by the fact that in Armenia and Asia Minor the arcs have been fractured in the process of bending over at or near the points where the approximations between the two series have taken place. The closer the constriction, the sharper, of course, becomes the curve, and the greater the tendency to split. In Asia Minor the union of the series has resulted in complete fracture; the folded area sinks beneath the waters of the Ægean to be represented by the islands which stud the Archipelago, and, further west, by the mountains of the Dalmatian coast.

On the east of Hindu Kush we are as yet in want of sufficient material for so convincing an analysis as the researches of geologists have rendered possible on the west. We know that in eastern Asia a vast area of elevated land is bounded both along the inner and the outer margins by mountain systems of wide extension and great height. Such are the systems of Altai and Tian-shan upon the north, and the mighty bow of the Himalayas on the south. Probably the Kuenlun range carries over the inner series of western Asia, extending eastwards from the Pamirs and serving as a buttress to the immensely elevated plateau of Tibet. If this view be correct, then the Tian-shan and

Altai systems may perhaps be regarded as minor earth-waves, following close upon the heels of the Kuenlun, and supporting the highlands of the Tarim basin and the desert of Gobi, the Han-hai or Dry Sea of the Chinese. The plain reader may be content to observe the echelon of mountain ranges which extends from Hindu Kush towards Behring Sea; to note the constant curvature of the arcs towards the south, until, in the Altai group, the eastern arms of the bows are protracted ever further towards the north; to contrast the low-lying plains along the western ends of the echelon with the lofty highlands of Mongolia on the east. The necks of the valleys issue upon the depression of Siberia and the low country through which the Oxus and Jaxartes flow.

In western Asia the elevated area with its flanking ranges is bordered on the north by the northern Paropamisus and further west by the Caucasus chain. The Paropamisus may perhaps be regarded as the most southerly of the many branches which belong to the system of Tian-shan.[1] Geologists invite us to connect the Paropamisus with the Caucasus, and trace the links of the broken chain to the mountains of Krasnovodsk on the Caspian, whence a submarine ridge carries the line into the mountains of Caucasus, to be protracted far to the west, through the Crimea, and emerge from the waters of the Black Sea in the Balkans, Carpathians and Alps. In this manner we see described on the north of the Asiatic highlands, with their series of inner arcs, a further arc of immense span and wide curvature, which is represented on the east by the northern Paropamisus and by the Caucasus on the west. Both these ranges may best be viewed as independent of the inner series; but Paropamisus is closely adpressed to the inner arc of Persia, and Caucasus is joined at a single point to the series, namely by the Meschic linking chain. Lines of elevation, similar to that which we have traced from Paropamisus, may be discovered, although with less orographical distinction, proceeding westwards and struggling over towards Europe from the more northerly branches of Tian-shan; they are almost lost in the great depression of the Turanian lowlands, but they follow arcs of increasing width of span.

This interesting study of the structure of Asia, which is due to the researches of recent years, not only serves to explain the pronounced features of Asiatic landscapes, as integral members of

[1] Such is the view of Suess.

a vast design, but also enables us to understand many of the movements of history and many of the phenomena of the human world.[1] India is enclosed on all sides by the sea or by the outer mountains, and appears reserved by natural causes for herself. China, with her teeming millions, is separated from western Asia by the whole bulk of the broadest and least hospitable portion of the system of lofty plateaux with peripheral ranges. The echelon of chains, which seam the continent in a north-easterly direction, are the nurseries of the hardiest tribes. The valleys which space these ranges are the arteries of human movement, and they lead from west to east, from east to west. Thus during the period of armed migrations which is represented by the Tartar conquests one division of the Tartar armies might be fighting in China on the Yellow River while another was laying waste Khorasan. The bend of the arcs towards the south places the framework of Nature in harmony with the migrations of man. The tablelands of Persia, Armenia and Asia Minor are members of a continuous system of elevated plains at a temperate altitude, which extend like some great causeway along the breadth of Asia, giving access from east to west, from west to east. This causeway forms the natural avenue of commerce and of conquest, by which the tide of war or of commercial intercourse ebbs and flows between the remote recesses of Central Asia and the Ionian shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Only on the east is the causeway blocked by Nature to human traffic, by the constriction of the arcs on the north of India, leading over by a gigantic knot of mountains into the impassable plateau of Tibet. The stream is therefore diverted from the highlands to the lowlands; great cities arise on the lowlands, at the mouths of the Tian-shan valleys, Merv, Bokhara, Samarkand. And when we contemplate and contrast the structure of Asia and of Europe—the vast forces which have produced the stately body of eastern Asia dying out towards the west in the insignificant but widely ramified elevations of the European mountain chains—we may readily understand how different has been the influence exercised by structural features upon the peoples of either continent. In Asia such features are a factor of the first importance, determining climate, controlling migrations,

[1] Besides the great work of Suess already cited, I may refer my reader to Dr. Edmund Naumann's admirable study: *Die Grundlinien Anatoliens und Centralasiens*, in Heltner's *Geographische Zeitschrift*, ii. Jahrgang, 1896, pp. 7-25, with two maps. Also to a paper by the same author in the *Report of the Sixth Int. Geog. Congress*, London, 1895, pp. (661)-(670).

setting barriers to intercourse or relentlessly fixing the highways which it must pursue. In Europe, on the other hand, they have done little more than diversify the scenery, and for purposes of peaceful or hostile movements among the nations may with some exceptions be almost left out of account. What are our European mountains but arbitrary wrinkles on the face of the continent? One valley leads over into another of much the same height above sea-level by a pass which is not more lofty than the neighbouring ridges. One plain is succeeded by a companion expanse of similar character, and only some small diversity in the forms of the spires of the churches tells the tale of national distinctions. Differentiation rather than the presence of marked ethnological types is characteristic of the peoples of Europe. But once the narrow strait is passed we may no longer dally with our geography; and the further we proceed towards the east and the inner sanctuaries of Nature the greater grows the necessity of comprehending phenomena which must always exercise a dominant influence upon human affairs. It will not suffice in Asia to observe the latitude of a great plain in order to know beforehand the degree of heat which it will support in summer, the rigour or the suavity of the climate during winter. You will be freezing in Erzerum while Erivan is relaxed in sunshine; yet both cities are placed on the margins of level expanses, and the advantage of latitude is in favour of the temperateness of that first named. Not even the convenient distinction of highlands and lowlands will carry us very far. We must enquire into the nature of the highlands; are the mountains their prevailing feature, or are those mountains, as we see them from the floor of the lowlands, a mere buttress to a sequence of elevated plains? Penetrate the chain, and you rise by successive steps from valley to valley, while each ridge is higher than the last. Follow its extension upon the map and you will see it rising from the Mediterranean and terminating in the knot of mountains north of India. Mark the characteristics of the people who inhabit it, be they Kurds or Lurs or Lazes, they will not offer much divergence from a common standard. Yet what a gulf of human nature between these and the inhabitants of the lowlands—a gulf which is scarcely spanned by the equalising tendencies of a long spell of misgovernment! When at length these alps expand, and you overlook a more level country, everything—climate, the aspect of the sky as well as of the land, people, language, cities, villages

are new. And yet our diplomatists who dwell on the Bosphorus, and ruminate Asiatic problems with the aid of indifferent maps which they would not pretend to understand, group the highlands and the lowlands, the shepherds of the mountains and the cultivators of the plains, all together—a strange collection of birds and beasts and fishes—in a single scheme of administrative reforms. The Turk is little wiser; but we may perhaps view with a large indifference his passive resistance to such reforms.

But to return to our plains and mountains—the country which we may still call Armenia takes its place as an integral member of the system of tablelands, buttressed by mountain ranges, which extends from the Hindu Kush to the Mediterranean Sea. It is not separated by any important natural frontier from Persia on the east or from Asia Minor on the west. Moreover most of the characteristics which are found in either of these neighbours are prevalent in Armenia to a greater or a lesser degree. The stratified rocks include the later Palæozoic, the Cretaceous, Eocene and Miocene series; and these extend across the whole system. The salt deposits of Miocene age which are spread so widely over Persia are not among the least remarkable of the surface features of Armenia; although they have not produced that widespread devastation which attends the extension of the great salt deserts over the Persian plateau.[1] In Armenia they are friendly to man, providing him with one of his necessaries; and the various salt works, known in Turkey under the name of *tuzla* or salt pans, have been exploited from immemorial times. Considerable depressions of the surface of the highlands are phenomena common to all three countries; and the same may be said of the volcanoes which are dominant in Armenian landscapes, but are not wholly absent from the contiguous territories on either side. All participate in the benefits of a southern climate, and are exempted by their elevation above sea-level from the excesses of a southern sun. Slowly-flowing rivers threading vast plains, mountains which determine districts rather than states; a natural penury of vegetation, enhanced by the depredations of countless goats, but perhaps balanced in the eyes of the traveller by the beauty of the land-forms—such are some among the many impressions which may be derived in various

[1] For a comprehensive account of the salt deserts of Persia, extending over 500 miles of country, I may refer my reader to Lord Curzon's *Persia*, London, 1892, vol. ii. pp. 246 *seq.*

degrees from a visit to any of the individual members of the group.

But, if Armenia be closely linked with her neighbours on the west and east, she is divided by some of the most effective of natural barriers and natural distinctions from the countries which lie to the north and south. The zones of mountains which on the one side separate her from the coast of the Black Sea and the Georgian depression, and on the other from the lowlands of Mesopotamia, possess in an equal degree the rugged character due to intense folding and are both of considerable width. Sharp ridges with serrated outlines rising one behind another, narrow valleys in which the shadows lie, hissing rivers and bush-grown rocks, grassy uplands or stretches of forest determine the scenery both of the northern and of the southern zone. The alpine region has a breadth of some fifty miles more or less in the direction of the Black Sea, while the corresponding zone, facing the lowlands about Diarbekr, extends, on the whole, over a smaller span. Both zones are practically unlimited in length. They have been factors of paramount influence in the history of the peoples, not only screening the territories they confine from those which lie outside, but also investing them with distinct climatic conditions. For these parallel belts of peripheral mountains do in fact perform the function of supports or buttresses to a series of elevated plains; the valleys in the alpine region are but the succession of terraces which rise to the margin of a lofty platform. A difference in level of several thousands of feet is productive of marked features in the habits and character of the inhabitants; while the alps themselves must necessarily determine the mode of life of the dwellers within them, constraining them to follow the vocation of shepherds rather than that of agriculturists. Thus along the section between Diarbekr and the Armenian highlands three strongly-contrasted types of people will be met. The nomad Arabs or Arabic-speaking cultivators of the lowlands are succeeded by the pastoral Kurds with their tribal organisation, and these again by the Armenian tillers of the soil.

I have already indicated the intimate connection of these peripheral mountains with the structural system of the Asiatic continent. The northerly belt belongs to the inner series of arcs, and that on the south to the outer series. The compression of these arcs—a phenomenon which has engaged our attention—has been effected in the greatest degree within the section of

country between Diarbekr and Trebizond. You see the two opposite arcs, one bent to the south and the other to the north, endeavouring to meet under the stress of contending pressures; while on either side of the section the curves diminish in intensity and the spines of the ranges have been allowed to expand like the spokes of a wheel. The northern boundary of Armenia is constituted by the mountains of the northern peripheral region, which enter the country on the west in the Gumbet Dagh. The line may be followed on the map on the north of Shabin Karahisar through the Giaour Dagh and the Kuseh Dagh to the pass over the Vavuk Dagh, lying to the north-west of the town of Baiburt. From the Vavuk pass the spine of the chain confines the valley of the Chorokh by a well-defined and regular parapet; until just east of the town of Ispir it commences to lose this singleness of feature, and to favour a tendency towards bifurcation and branching out. The ridges stretch across the valley in an east-north-easterly direction, the direction which the spine has so long pursued; and their course may be traced through the mountainous country on the north of Olti until they become buried beneath the volcanic accumulations of the plateau country in the districts of Göleh and Ardahan. It is most interesting to trace their probable emergence from this canopy on the further side of the tableland, and to recognise in the elevations of Shishtapa (north of Alexandropol) and of Madatapa ridges that have survived the splitting and fracture of the Pontic chain. But this is a feature of greater interest to the geologist than to the geographer; and the latter will follow the Black Sea range through the heights of the Khachkar and Parkhal mountains to the Kukurt Dagh on the west of Artvin. The ridge which stretches thence in a north-north-easterly direction towards the seaboard, giving passage to the Chorokh and determining the Russian frontier, has been deflected by the mass of the Karchkhal mountains, the radial system to the north-east of Artvin. It crosses the river close to the coast behind Batum, and may be traced through the peaks of Taginaura, Gotimeria and Nepiszkaro along the plains of Imeritia to the passage of the Kur through the gorge of Borjom. These last-named peaks belong to the Akhaltsykh-Imeritian border range, which my reader has crossed with me by the pass of Zikar, and of which the direction is almost due east and west.

It is impossible to delimit the northern frontier of Armenia

by a slavish insistence upon the boundary of the Black Sea range. That system is the natural boundary for a distance of very many miles, as it extends along the course first of the Kelkid Su, the ancient Lycus, and then along that of the Chorokh. But the fracture of the arc which has taken place in the country watered by the uppermost branches of the Kur and Arpa Chai, and the eating back of the more easterly affluents of the Chorokh, which have carved out the intricate country in the neighbourhood of Olti, have resulted in the interruption of the normal sequence until it is again resumed in the Akhaltsykh-Imeritian range. It is consonant with the natural conditions to take the frontier across the valley of the Chorokh in the vicinity of Ispir, and to lead it by the heights which contain the sources of the Chorokh and the Serchemeh Chai to the Dümlü Dagh, the parent mountain of the Western Euphrates. It will then follow, first in an easterly and then in a north-easterly direction, the elevated water-parting between the basins of the Araxes and the Black Sea; and, after effecting a union through the Chamar Dagh with the volcanoes of the Soghanlu Dagh, will be protracted along the meridional and volcanic elevation which confines the highlands of Göleh and Ardahan on the west. The junction of these vaulted heights with the Akhaltsykh-Imeritian range may be traced through the ridge of the Sakulaperdi Dagh to the peak of Gotimeria. All the rivers on the northern slopes of this section of the Armenian frontier drain into the Black Sea.

The passes across this zone are of considerable elevation, though a good number are open all the year round. I have been unable to ascertain the height of the pass over the Gumbet Dagh between Karahisar and Kerasun. But the valleys of the Upper Kelkid and [illegible] Upper Chorokh may be reached from Trebizond without encountering a greater altitude than something less than 7000 feet. To this figure must be added another 600 to 1000 feet before the traveller will have crossed the block of elevated tableland interposed between those valleys and the great Armenian cities, Erzinjan and Erzerum. East of Baiburt the spine of the Pontic range becomes more lofty: and the track which leads from Rizeh to Ispir in the Chorokh valley surmounts it at a height which has been estimated at 9000 feet above the sea. Where the frontier has become coterminous with the northern border heights of Erzerum and Pasin the roads are taken by passes of over 7000 feet (Erzerum-Bar-Olti) and 8500 feet

(Hasan Kala-Olti) into the basin of the Black Sea; while during its protraction northwards through the Soghanlu Dagh to the Sakulaperdi Dagh it may be traversed by well-beaten paths or tolerable roads at elevations which range between 6085 feet (Eshak-Meidan Pass) and about 7000 feet. The principal avenues of communication across the mountainous region are those of Erzinjan-Gümüshkhaneh, Baiburt-Gümüshkhaneh, Erzerum-Olti, Kars-Olti, Ardahan-Olti and Ardahan-Ardanuch. A road has been constructed from Kutais to Abastuman, and is gaining traffic every year.

Copious rainfall and abundant vegetation are characteristic of the northern peripheral mountains. In some of the valleys the clouds settle for several months in the year, seldom lifting to disclose a view of the sun. It may often happen that during several weeks or even months crests and depressions alike will be shrouded in mist. In summer there is produced the likeness of a succession of forcing houses, the slopes and hollows being covered with a bewildering tangle of trees and creepers and scarcely passable undergrowth. From the branches are festooned the lichens, grey-white streamers like human hair; the crimson stools of a fungus shine out from the gloomy brakes, and the pointed pink petals of the Kolchian crocus clothe each respite of open ground. Such conditions are most prevalent in the narrow valleys near the Pontic coast, while the slopes which face the Rion and the opposite Caucasus are distinguished by magnificent forests. Several peoples, distributed over fairly distinct zones, inhabit these fastnesses. On the west we have the Greeks, inclined to commerce and close to a seaboard; they may be found struggling upwards to the spine of the range and even in a sporadic manner upon its southern slopes. Further east dwell the Lazis, a wild people; and their neighbours, the Ajars, in the mountains behind Batum. These are succeeded by a population of Georgian shepherds and small cultivators, whose picturesque chalets are surrounded with Indian corn.

It remains to follow the extension of the mountains of the northern border during their progress eastwards from the Borjom gorge. The comparative narrowness of the belt in the neighbourhood of that great cleft is explained by the fracture of the arc to the south of this region and the covering up of its more southerly members by volcanic emissions. But this decrease in width is to some extent balanced by the propinquity of the Caucasus. It is

in this neighbourhood that the single link connecting the belt with Caucasus stretches across the Georgian depression, dividing the Rion from the Kur; it may be known as the Meschic linking chain. East of this barrier the vegetation diminishes in luxuriance. The Akhaltsykh-Imeritian range is continued beyond the gorge by the latitudinal Trialethian chain—a system of which the backbone is formed by the Arjevan ridge, and which is bounded on three sides by the course of the Kur. A branch of this system is seen to continue the direction of the Pontic range, inclining off at a sharp angle from the principal elevation to form the valley of the Gujarctis. It culminates in the peaks of the Sanislo group at an extreme height of 9350 feet, and sinks beneath the lavas of the plateau region. The Trialethian mountains have undergone a process of uptilt, which has caused them to fall away abruptly towards the north and to form terraces of plateau-like character on the south.

Just as on the west we were constrained to draw the natural frontier inwards from the spine of the Pontic range, so on the east the next successors of the Trialethian ridges lie outside the proper boundary of the Armenian plains. A glance at the map will show that a dislocation of the natural features has taken place in this region. The inner arc, so clearly defined on the one side by the Pontic chain and on the other by the Shah Dagh, overlooking Lake Gökcheh, has snapped during the process of bending over; and the survivors of the catastrophe, the ridges which obstruct the Khram and the Somketian mountains, are constrained to play a subordinate part. The water-parting and principal elevation is composed of volcanoes, reared in a meridional direction. What an impressive analogy to the phenomena on the side of the Black Sea! These volcanoes pursue two lines, one line close behind the other, and the outer or more easterly far the longer of the two. It is the outer series, known as the Gori Mokri, or wet mountains, that constitute the border of the Armenian highlands on this side. The traveller who journeys westwards from the plateau of Zalka (5000 feet) up the elevated valley of the river Kzia to the little upland plain of the same name (7000 feet)[1] will be treading on the dividing line between the folded mountains of the Trialethian system and the meridional volcanic series. On his left hand he will admire the shapely cone of Tawkoteli (9211 feet), which

[1] This must be a most interesting approach to Armenia from the side of Tiflis, and is worth suggesting to the lover of unbeaten tracks.

constitutes the most northerly of these volcanic elevations. The barrier is continued southwards through the Samsar Dagh (10,770 feet) to the Daly Dagh; and thence along the eastern shore of the lonely lake of Toporovan (6875 feet) to the dual crown of Agrikar (9765 feet) and to the conical summit of the Emlekli Dagh (10,016 feet). The sequence ends in the heights of Karakach (over 10,000 feet), of which the southerly extension is interrupted by the latitudinal ridges of Aglagan and Shishtapa. But the border is protracted along the parting of the waters into the westerly extremities of the Pambak chain.

We may, perhaps, regard this chain as the most southerly of the latitudinal ridges which begin on the north with the Akhaltsykh-Imeritian and Trialethian systems. It extends the area of the highlands for some distance towards the east, when, after commencing to incline in an east-south-easterly direction, it effects a junction with the Shah Dagh. This last-named ridge takes the frontier along the eastern shore of Lake Gökcheh to the confines of Karabagh; and the elevation may be traced through the spine of the northern Karabagh mountains across the Kur to the range which faces the Caspian Sea. But Karabagh may be regarded as a separate geographical unit, combining in miniature many of the characteristics of the Armenian highlands—an inner plateau region flanked by peripheral ranges. The immemorial home of Armenian inhabitants, the seat of Tartar immigrants and the happy hunting-ground of nomad Kurds, it constitutes a solid outer buttress to Armenia on the side of the Caspian.[1] The true boundary must be taken southwards from the Ginal Dagh (over 11,000 feet) to the Kety Dagh, where it forms a loop towards the west; and, after almost encircling an upland sheet of water, called the Ala Göl, is protracted through the heights of Sir-er-syrchaly (11,298 feet) and Salvarty (10,422 feet) to the valley of the Araxes at Migry just east of Ordubad. The Karadagh mountains on the southern bank of the river continue the ridges of Karabagh; and the natural frontier is pushed westwards up the course of the Araxes as far as the village of Julfa. From this point you have the choice of two methods of demarcation, both of which repose on

[1] Karabagh is portrayed to us from various points of view by Smith and Dwight, *Missionary Researches in Armenia*, London, 1834, letters ix.-xiii.; Radde, G., *Karabagh* in *Petermann's Mitt.*, Ergänzungsheft No. 100, Gotha, 1890; Abich, H., *op. infra cit.*, part iii. p. 4; Madame B. Chantre, *À travers l'Arménie Russe*, Paris, 1893, chs. iv.-viii.

geographical facts. The line may be taken south-eastwards along the marginal ridge of the Karadagh to the water-parting between the basin of the Araxes on the one side and that of Lake Urmi on the other. This parting is of little orographical relief, but it would conduct the frontier almost in a straight line to the serried ridges of the southern peripheral zone on the south of Lake Van.[1] Or the more pronounced bulwark between the Lake Van and Lower Araxes basins may seem to constitute the true boundary of the Armenian country. In this case an arbitrary line must be drawn from behind Bayazid, leading from the crest of these mountains, which at present constitute the Turko-Persian frontier to our original starting-point, Julfa. My reader will observe that we have left the barrier of the northern peripheral mountains, to explore the less certain limits on the side of Persia.

We have now pursued the northern border of the Armenian highlands from the coast of the Black Sea to that of the Caspian, where the belt passes over into the mountains framing Persia upon the north to be protracted into the Hindu Kush. The corresponding southern zone is much more simple of feature; but it lies outside the province of the present chapter, being included, throughout its entire extension along these highlands, within Turkish territory. Between the northern and southern zones of peripheral mountains several distinct but minor members of the orographical system we have been examining furrow the surface of the tableland. These will receive their proper attention in the companion chapter of the second volume, situated as they are for the most part beyond the limits of our present survey. But one of them may be traced to the commanding elevation which determines the valley of the Araxes during its passage through Chaldiran to the confluence of the Arpa Chai; and it is this range—for it deserves to be described as a range—that not only constitutes the present frontier between the Russian and Turkish Empires, but in fact divides the area of Armenia into two parts. You must either cross the spine of this chain,

[1] This demarcation has been adopted by Herrmann Abich, who, however, would include the Karadagh. He speaks of the elevation which may be traced from the neighbourhood of Ardabil in Persia through the volcano of Savalan all the way to the mountains south of Lake Van as the "natural physical frontier between Armenia and Azerbaijan" and as the "southern border *chain* of Great Armenia." But he is pressing the word chain a little unduly. See *Geologische Forschungen in den kauk. Ländern*, Vienna, 1882, part ii., introduction, pp. 10 and 11.

which describes a symmetrical curve, or follow along the plains at its northern or southern flanks, should you desire to pass from the plateau region on the north and east to the corresponding districts on the south and west. In the preceding chapter we have become familiar with some of its interesting features; and we have been introduced to it under the general name of the Ararat system or Aghri Dagh. Shatin Dagh is another name under which its westerly portion is designated by some writers, and which is scarcely less well qualified to express its ruggedness. This range carries the natural frontier between the two divisions from the Kuseh Dagh (11,262 feet) in the west to Little Ararat (12,840 feet) in the east.

It will thus be seen that the present area of Russian Armenia corresponds in a remarkable manner with the limits assigned by Nature to the more north-easterly of the two extensive regions into which she has parcelled Armenian soil. The Russian frontier is drawn from the coast of the Black Sea along the water-parting of the tributaries to the western bank of the Lower Chorokh through the peripheral region, and west of the town of Olti, to the Armenian border at the Chakhar Dagh. Thence it is taken across the Araxes to the spine of the Aghri or Shatin Dagh just north-west of the dome of Kuseh Dagh. It follows the spine of the range to the neighbourhood of Great Ararat, whose hallowed summit it embraces within the dominions of the Tsar. From the crest of the Little Ararat, whose south-eastern slopes are left to Persia, it reaches across the plain to the right bank of the Araxes a little below the famous monastery of Khor Virap. The Araxes forms the boundary between the Russian and Persian Empires from this point to near its confluence with the Kur.

It is a misleading, nay, a false conception of natural features to distribute the surface of the plateau region into a number of distinct geographical units. That is a method which is favoured by Russian sciolists with political connections in their endeavour to confuse the essential unity of a country which Russia has not yet fully absorbed. Enter this region where you will and with the eyes of any qualified traveller, the same or similar impressive characteristics will at once appeal to the mind. The German scientist Koch has well described these idiosyncrasies as they may be observed from the marginal districts on the west. After a long and laborious climb from the valley of Ardanuch (1800

feet) to the summit of the pass which leads to Ardahan (at least 7000 feet), he was astonished to observe that instead of a rounded ridge, descending with more or less abruptness to lower levels on the further side, the elevation upon which he stood was continued towards the east by the gentle slope of a lofty plateau. "Here was the commencement," he says, "of the plateau which slopes away from the pass, and which is usually called the Armenian plateau." The same traveller journeyed back into the Chorokh region from the highlands of Göleh on the south of Ardahan. On this occasion he crossed the water-parting at the Kanly Dagh between Ardahan and Olti. He tells us that it consists of a narrow ridge with red, porphyritic rocks. He describes the double prospect from the summit, with its contrast of forms and impressions. On the one side, towards the Kur, a scarcely perceptible incline, forming upland valleys after a descent of only some 1500 feet, and leading over to vague and vaulted heights. On the other, in the direction of Olti, rent mountains, gaping ravines—nowhere a gentle, convex shape. Where he was placed the climate was raw, even in early September, and scarcely tempered by a southern sun. Deep down, and far away, they could see the river of Olti, winding like a snake through a maze of sheltered valleys.[1] The language in which Herrmann Abich describes his impressions, coming from the side of Georgia up the valley of the Akstafa, and reaching the pass (7355 feet) over the eastern marginal heights between the village of Bekant and the town of Alexandropol, is not dissimilar to that of Koch. He speaks of the strong contrast between the physical characteristics of the plateau region before him and those of the peripheral mountains he was leaving behind. He describes the prevailing horizontality of the land-forms which he overlooked, extending to the limits of sight. In another place he alludes to the lofty, rim-like elevation with which "the Armenian plateau breaks away to the valleys of Ajara."[2] I might multiply the instances in which the most competent observers have at the same time recognised the unity of the plateau region and its sharp distinction from the peripheral mountains.

My reader has journeyed with me from the Zikar Pass to Akhaltsykh and Akhalkalaki; from the cañon of the Toporovan

[1] Karl Koch, *Reise im pontischen Gebirge und turkischen Armenien*, Weimar, 1846, pp. 203-4.

[2] Herrmann Abich, *Geologische Forschungen in den kauk. Landern*, Vienna, 1882 and 1887, part ii. pp. 20-21, part iii. p. 81.

river and the basin of the Kur to the streams which constitute the most northerly sources of the Araxes. We have crossed the country from Alexandropol to Erivan, from Erivan to Kars, from Kars to Kagyzman. What an impressive unity underlies the pleasing diversity of the landscapes, which melt into one another as you pass! The partings of the waters are formed by slopes which you perceive with difficulty, so gradual has been the rise and the decline. The territories of Akhaltsykh, Akhalkalaki, Alexandropol, Kars and Ardahan are all bound up together in the distribution of the space, and share features in common to a much greater extent than they are distinguished by local idiosyncrasies. The mountains, of which the outlines are never absent from the landscape—soft, long-drawn, convex shapes—stand on the floor of the tableland, like pieces upon a chessboard, which one may move from square to square. Such are the radial mass of Dochus Punar near Akhaltsykh (over 9500 feet), the two considerable elevations which enclose Lake Chaldir (Akhbaba Dagh, 9973 feet; Kisir Dagh, 10,472 feet), and even the colossal Alagöz (13,436 feet). All are due to volcanic action, quite recent in geological time; and a similar origin belongs to the minor shapes which stud the country like bubbles upon a cooling body. Mountains of this character perform the function of boundary columns between the various districts, great and small. They determine but do not separate. How different in form and function from the folded ridges of the peripheral region, among which a single example of such recent volcanic fabrics could seldom be observed.

If we desire for convenience to partition the plateau region which is Russian Armenia, it falls most naturally into two spheres. The one will comprise a rectangular area, of which the limits on the west and east are the meridional volcanic water-partings from the Soghanlu Dagh to the heights of Sakulaperdi on one side and from the Karakach Dagh to Tawkoteli on the other. The southern boundary of this area will be the cañon of the Araxes from its entrance into Russian territory to below the confluence of the Arpa Chai. Towards the north it includes the districts as far as the Sanislo extension of the Trialethian mountains and the Akhaltsykh-Imeritian border chain. The vast circumference of Alagöz is placed on its south-eastern confines, sending out long feelers towards the left bank of the Arpa Chai, pushing back the mountains of the eastern border and, as it were, propping up the

highlands on the north-west. This volcano may be said to lead over to the second sphere, which is for a great part an area of considerable depression, and, as compared with the longitudinal axis and symmetrical shape of its companion, is of irregular form with the greatest length from north-west to south-east. These two spheres are distinguished by features which are sufficiently contrasted to suggest a double image to the mind.

I. I have invited attention to the characteristics which Armenia shares in common with her neighbours in the series of the Asiatic tablelands, Persia on the east and Asia Minor on the west. In the brief survey to which I proceed of the plateau region within the Russian frontier it is necessary at the outset to remark upon some of the idiosyncrasies which distinguish Armenia as a whole from the other members of the series. There is in the first place the far greater elevation, investing her territory with the attributes of a roof to the adjacent countries, from which the waters gather to be precipitated in different directions, and to find their way not only to the Black Sea and the Caspian but also by almost endless stages to the Persian Gulf. The prominent part which has been played by recent volcanic action is another and not less impressive phenomenon. Which of her neighbours could compete with her in this respect? Where could one meet with an Ararat, a Sipan and a Nimrud, to say nothing of an Alagoz and a Bingol? Both these manifestations are exemplified in a striking manner by the surface features of the rectangular area of the more northerly sphere.

The higher levels of this region are situated at an altitude of some 7000 feet above the sea. I am speaking not of the mountains but of the plains. The uplands which give rise to the Kur in the district of Goleh must come very near to this level. The parting of the waters of the Kur and Araxes near the village of Shishtapa, in an open landscape which may be compared to rolling downs, lies at about 7000 feet. Lake Chaldir has an elevation of 6522 feet; while of the smaller sheets of water Lake Toporovan, with 6876 feet, and the Arpa Gol, with 6706 feet, slightly better this already considerable figure. Where the plateau falls away to the abysmal cañon of the Araxes its edge is nearly 6500 feet high. The town of Ardahan stands at a level of 5840 feet and Kars of 5700 feet. Alexandropol, the principal city, occupies the hollow of a vast basin-like plain; yet it is over 5000 feet above the sea. These elevations are much greater than

the average even in Persia, though they are to a certain extent maintained in the frontier province of Azerbaijan and along the edge of the southern peripheral mountains (Tabriz, 4650 feet; but Tehran, 3800 feet; Ispahan, 5070 feet).

The process of gradual uplift of the region by earth movements has been attended by eruptive action, flooding the country with volcanic matter, levelling inequalities of the ground and adding to the height. It has been estimated that the volcanic deposits laid bare in the ravines of the streams which descend from the radial Dochus Punar attain a depth of hundreds of yards.[1] A similar phenomenon is made manifest in the cañon of the Araxes—a cleft which in the neighbourhood of the village of Armutli, west of Kagyzmân, has a depth of about 2000 feet and a width on top of at least a mile.[2] There the Miocene sedimentary deposits are overlaid with tuffs and lavas in a belt over 300 yards deep.[3] The points of emission of volcanic matter are in some cases true volcanoes, in others mere pustules or fissures of varying extent. One or other of these features is never absent from the landscape. But the fires are extinct; the viscous seas have long been solid; not a breath of smoke rises from the stark summits which erewhile were wreathed with vapours reflecting the glow of the flames beneath.

The distribution of such shapes due to volcanic agency may often appear arbitrary to an unpractised traveller. Here a group of stately forms resembling the giants of a forest, there a number of insignificant eminences representing the small fry. All will be found to be subject to definite and ascertainable principles, the nature of which becomes clearer at each step forward of scientific research. Perhaps the most interesting principle which we see operative in this region is the outcrop of volcanoes along meridional lines. Such groups pursue a course at right angles to the strike of the rocks within the area of the peripheral mountains. In this connection we may recall the fact that the plateau region with which we are dealing occupies the apex of the bend over of the inner arc. Lines of fracture have been thrown out at right angles to the folding, and eruptive agency has fastened upon these weakened zones of the earth's crust. Not only may these lines be traced on the west and east of the plateau, of which, indeed, they have largely determined the shape, but also well

[1] Abich, *op. cit.* part iii. p. 18. [2] *Ibid.* part ii. p. 138. [3] *Ibid.* part ii. p. 139.

inside of the marginal districts. In the west we have the Soghanlu group stretching north to Allah Akbar (10,218 feet), whence the direction is continued through the Ueurli Dagh (9055 feet) and the Arzian Dagh to the Chibukh-Naryn-Bashi Dagh. There the volcanic water-parting effects a junction with the Akhaltsykh-Imeritian chain in the ridge of the Sakulaperdi Dagh. In the east we have already followed the row of marginal volcanoes from Tawkoteli to Karakach. Inside these series we recognise this same north-south direction in the Abul-Samsar system, in the mountains on either side of Lake Chaldir, and, lastly, in the connection which we can scarcely err in assuming between the Kisir Dagh, overlooking the westerly shore of this lake, and its neighbour on the north, the Dochus Punar.

Compared with Alagöz and Ararat even the absolute height of these mountains may be termed insignificant. The lofty level of the plains from which their slopes gather robs them of several thousand feet. Great Abul, with an altitude of nearly 11,000 feet, rises from a plain which itself lies at an elevation of 5500 feet. The dome-shaped vaultings of the Soghanlu Dagh near some of the sources of the Kars river are almost entirely shorn of their considerable stature by the height of the adjacent downs. In such surroundings the mountains appear to the eye as little more than hills.

The rivers as a rule flow in deep cañons which they have eroded in the volcanic soil. Their head waters meander over grassy downs. Temperately they thread their way over the uplands or in the cañons, except where blocks of lava may have tumbled into the trough, causing the stream to wreathe and hiss. You pass from district to district either along such natural avenues, with the towering cliffs, for the most part bare, on either hand; or, emerging from the weird scene within the hollow, over the surface of almost limitless plains. Not a tree in the landscape, and only patches of fallow and stubble, without a boundary, with rarely a village discernible from afar.

From time to time you may obtain a glimpse of the peripheral mountains—serrated summits, bush-grown slopes. These contrast to the soft convexities of the forms about you and the vaultings of the volcanic eminences. The surface of the friable soil is devoid of wood and almost of vegetation; and the volcanic matter of which it is composed produces tints of pink

and ochre upon which the shadows lie transparent and thin. The rarefied atmosphere of these high regions braces the faculties and sharpens the senses; and whatever clouds may have climbed the barrier of the peripheral ranges are suspended high in the heaven, seldom obscuring the brilliant sun. During winter the land is covered with snow.

It is a country admirably adapted to grow cereals. The plains through which the Arpa Chai (grain river) eats its way to the Araxes constituted one of the granaries of Armenia in historical times.[1] At the present day they have not recovered from the devastations of the Mussulman peoples, and the Russians are jealous of allowing the Armenians a free hand. Extraordinary fertility is induced by the intermixture of the lavas with alluvial or lacustrine deposits. The black earth of the plains about Akhalkalaki is famous[2]; and the soil in the neighbourhood of Alexandropol derives its richness from the incidence of a peculiar kind of lava side by side with the sediment of a former lake. The southerly extension of these vanished waters is marked by the belt of high ground extending from Alagöz across the plains to the Arpa Chai. The river has forced its way through this elevation between Ani and Magaspert.[3]

Other effects of the violent disturbance to which the region has been subjected are manifest on a large scale. Thus all the way from the Soghanlu Dagh on the south to the neighbourhood of the mountains of the Ajars on the north the ground has fallen away to the labyrinth of valleys which feed the Chorokh by what geologists would call an extensive fault. The edge of the plateau region stands up boldly upon that side from the levels adjacent on the west. A still more recent earth movement may be represented by the uptilt towards the north-east of a considerable block of country lying between Kars and the junction of the Arpa with the Araxes. This phenomenon, which recalls a similar occurrence in the Trialethian district, has occasioned the curious course of the stream of Kars, which, rising in close vicinity to the flood of the same river to which ultimately it becomes tributary, pursues a course almost at right angles to that of the Araxes for a distance of thirty miles. To the same cause is in part due the extraordinary elevation of the levels along the

[1] The old Armenian province of Shirak.
[2] An analysis of this earth is given by Abich (*op. cit.* part iii. p. 49).
[3] Abich, *op. cit.* part ii. pp. 35-46.

left bank of the Araxes between Armutli and the confluence of the Arpa Chai.

Besides the last-named stream this lofty stage of the Armenian tableland gives birth to one of the great rivers of western Asia. The Kur rises from the highlands on the south of Ardahan, between the wall of mountain which overlooks Lake Chaldir on the west and the rim of the plateau region. In Turkish times this district constituted a separate fief, and was governed by a hereditary prince of Georgian origin who resided at Urut. The name of the district, Göleh, still figures on the Russian maps. It is subject to a rigorous climate, the snow lying during eight months in some years. Only the hardiest of the cereals come to maturity; yet the olive and the pomegranate flourish in the valley of Artvin, but thirty miles distant, and even at this altitude and during winter the rays of a southern sun temper the cold. One of the principal arms of the river comes from the south-west, and is named the river of Ardahan; it is joined by four considerable tributaries, of which the most easterly is said by Koch to have been known to the inhabitants under the name of Kyürr.[1] Even at the present day the Kur is called the river of Ardahan until its entry into the passage of Borjom. The basin from within which these various branches gather has a length which may be computed at eight hours' journey on horseback and a breadth equivalent to about six hours. It abounds in springs, and marshes cover its floor. Below Ardahan, where it skirts the base of the Dochus Punar system, the Kur threads a narrow valley, deeply buried in the volcanic soil. So it flows past the grottoes of Vardzia and the Devil's City at Zeda Tmogvi, augmented by small affluents of which the largest is the Karri Chai. At Khertvis it is joined by the Toporovan river, bringing the drainage of the districts on the east, and swirling into the channel with foam-shot waves. The united volume dwells for a short space in wider landscapes, until it pierces the extreme base of the Sanislo branch of the Trialethian mountains, and is again confined in a narrow valley. Thence it issues upon the plains about Akhaltsykh, receives assembled tributaries from the northern border range, and disappears into the gorge of Borjom.

II. A traveller coming from Alexandropol down the stream of the Arpa or along the valley of the Abaran, further east, can

[1] Karl Koch, *op. cit.* pp. 223 *seq.* He regards the south-western branch as the most considerable.

scarcely fail to become sensible of an appreciable change in climate and scenery by the time he shall have rounded the colossal pile of Alagöz. It is not, indeed, a new country or a new clime. The shapes which rise on the skyline are due to the same volcanic agency which has imprinted its character upon the northern landscapes. The shelving away of the ground to the basin-like depression which receives the Araxes recalls similar surface features in the northern districts. The rays of the sun fall from a heaven which remains blue. Clouds are still floating upon the azure, or are suspended upon the higher outlines. What has changed is the scale and intensity of the phenomena. The hills have given place to great mountains, the down-like expanses to one vast area of sloping ground. Into those dreamy spaces sweep the forms of the landscape, circled round them for a visible distance of some sixty miles.

The valley of the Araxes from the neighbourhood of Sardarabad to that of Julfa—a space of over a hundred miles—composes nearly one-half of the more southerly sphere of north-eastern Armenia. We are already so familiar with its overpowering individuality that it would be turning finished ground to describe it anew. For many a mile it is only confined at an immense interval by the fabric of Ararat and the pile of Alagöz. But, even when the river—a ribbon in the expanse—has already distanced the Little Ararat, the folds of the landscape are ample into which it descends. Volcanoes on such a huge scale as these two Armenian giants could scarcely be expected to rise save on the margins of a great depression, whether subsidence may have been the cause or the effect. To the 7000 feet of the plateau region on the north this basin-like plain opposes a maximum elevation of 3000 feet and a minimum of something over 2000 feet.

The vine flourishes and is cultivated in these plains of the Araxes, and fields of castor-oil plant grace the ground. Such oases with thriving villages soften the lap of the landscape, and diversify the wide stretches of rich but idle soil which the network of trenches with their fertilising waters have not yet reached. Irrigation rather than rainfall is here the productive agency; and, indeed, this valley, with a yearly rainfall of only about six inches, is probably the driest throughout Russian Transcaucasia. The storms of the Pontic region spend themselves before reaching this haven; but they beat against the volcanoes

of the meridional water-parting on the easterly margin of the more northerly sphere. Even at Alexandropol the yearly rainfall is almost three times as great as in the neighbourhood of Ararat. And while the climate of the city on the Arpa may compare with St. Lawrence in North America, that of Erivan resembles Palermo or Barcelona.[1]

On the north of this most extensive depression of the surface of Armenia lies the plateau region supporting Lake Gökcheh. The axis or greatest length of that expanse of sweet water lies about parallel to the course of the Araxes, to which it sends a tributary varying in volume with the season of the year through a trench-like passage at its south-westerly extremity.[2] On the north the lake is confined by a long ridge of the peripheral mountains, and its lofty level (6340 feet) is held up by the volcanic plateau of Akhmangan, acting as a dam on the side of the low-lying plains. The Akhmangan region consists of a gently vaulted platform, interrupted by a series of volcanic eminences extending over a distance of nearly thirty miles. Several of their cone-shaped summits attain a height of nearly 11,000 feet, and one, the Akh Dagh, of close upon 12,000 feet above sea-level. An absence of springs, due to the nature of the volcanic rock, is characteristic not only of this region but also of that part of the neighbouring Karabagh country which lies within the embrace of the two mountainous zones.[3] In this respect it contrasts to the well-watered and wooded retreats of the district of Darachichak to the west of the lake. The wealthier citizens of Erivan take refuge in those pleasant upland valleys when the plain of the Araxes has become a furnace under the rays of a midsummer sun.

The area of the country comprised within the two spheres of which I have been speaking is about 20,587 square miles. With the exception of a narrow strip on the right bank of the Araxes, measuring 1518 square miles, the entire territory—more than commensurate with that of Servia—lies within the dominions of the Tsar.

[1] Abich, *op. cit.* part ii. p. 23. [2] See Vol. II. of the present work, Ch. IV. p. 44.
[3] Abich, *op. cit.* part ii. pp. 9 and 38.

CHAPTER XXII

STATISTICAL AND POLITICAL

THE solid block of territory over which Russia now rules on the tableland of Armenia is neither a new acquisition nor the fruit of a single conquest. At the commencement of the last century she gained a foothold upon it by the voluntary accession of the Georgian kingdom and its constitution into a Russian province in 1802. This event, the outcome of the folly of the Mussulman powers, who had driven the Christians to despair, was followed by the rapid expansion of the northern empire in these countries as the result of successful war. Karabagh was taken from Persia in 1813, and the important khanate of Erivan in 1828; from Turkey, the district of Akhaltsykh in 1829, and the fortress and province of Kars in 1878. Appearing as a deliverer of the Christian peoples and profiting by their aid, Russia has succeeded in advancing her border beyond the Araxes and to the threshold of Erzerum, and in establishing herself behind a well-rounded frontier which comprises the venerated mountain of Armenia as well as the seat of the supreme spiritual government to which the Armenians bow.

The Armenian provinces constitute a part of the great administrative system of the Caucasus, which is presided over by a single Governor-General. Formerly it was usual to appoint a Grand Duke to this important post, who exercised, not without advantage to the country, a very large measure of personal initiative. At the present day it is occupied by a nobleman of high rank; but his administration has become much more intimately connected with the bureaucratic machine which is worked from St. Petersburg. He remains, however, the principal civil and military authority in the Caucasus, which consists of no less then twelve Governments, and is divided into North Caucasus and Trans-

caucasia. North Caucasus is composed of the Governments of Kuban, Terek and Stavropol; while the Governments of Chernomorsk (a narrow strip of coast at the foot of the Caucasus range between Novorossiysk on the Black Sea and a point a little north of Pitsunda), Kutais, Tiflis, Zakataly, Daghestan, Baku, Elizabetpol, Erivan and Kars are embraced under the title of Transcaucasia. Five of the Governments, namely Kuban, Terek, Daghestan, Zakataly and Kars, are still in the military stage of administration. The territories of North Caucasus lie quite outside the scope of the present work; and the Government of Daghestan ought more properly to be classed with the Northern Governments, lying as it does to the north of the main ridge of the Caucasus range. To the same category belong certain districts of the Government of Baku; but for statistical purposes it is advisable to retain them under Transcaucasia, in order to preserve the unity of the Government. On the other hand, the little Government of Chernomorsk may either be left out of account, or be included under North Caucasus. Transcaucasia will thus consist of seven Governments, of which the names and population, according to the two last censuses of 1886 and of 1897, are exhibited in the following table. I must explain that the figures of 1897 have not yet been split up into the different racial elements of which the populations of the various Governments are composed.

TABLE I.—POPULATION OF RUSSIAN TRANSCAUCASIA (including Russian Armenia)

Government.	Pop. 18	Armenian Pop 1886.	Pop. 1897.	Square Mileage.	Pop. per sq. mile 1886.	Pop per sq mil 1897.
Tiflis[1]	875,429	211,743	958,775	15,305.4	57.2	62.643
Erivan	670,405	375,700	804,757	10,074.75	66.54	79.878
Kars[2]	200,868	44,280	292,498	7,307.29	27.489	40 028
Kutais	923,306	16,399	1,075,861	13,967.5	66.1	77.026
Elizabetpol	728,943	258,324	871,557	16,720.5	43 6	52.125
Baku	712,703	55,459	789,659	15,094.59	47.110	52 314
Zakatal	74,449	521	82,168	1,542.04	48.28	53.285
Total	4,186,103	962,426	4,875,275	80,012,07	52.318	60.931

[1] The Statistics of 1886 underestimate the population of Tiflis town. I have corrected them on the assumption that the population of the city in 1886 was 145,731. See the Caucasus Calendar for 1893, p. 20.

[2] I have substituted the figures of 1891 for those of 1886. The former are given in the Caucasus Calendar for 1893, p. 43.

The admirable volume of statistics for Transcaucasia which we owe to the labours of M. de Seidlitz, and which was published at Tiflis by order of the civil government in 1893, supplies us with the most detailed information concerning these Russian provinces —the numbers of the different races and of the votaries of the various religious sects, and how the inhabitants may be classed and labelled as nobles or clergy, as tradesmen or as tillers of the soil. The figures are derived from the census of 1886, and we are thus presented with a fascinating statistical picture of the country towards the close of the nineteenth century. I do not propose to spoil the effect of his ingenious combinations by transferring them to my own pages in a mangled form; or to forestall the pleasure which the perusal of his serried columns is sure to bring to every well-regulated mind. But their aid will be useful, and indeed indispensable, in fixing upon a surer foundation those more general conceptions and conclusions which are suggested by the experience of travel. The country immediately on the north of the Armenian tableland—the plain of the Rion on the north-west, and the wide trough of the Kur on the north—is inhabited by various branches of the Georgian family and by settlers of Tartar race; while the Caucasus itself, the northern boundary of the whole geographical system, contains within its countless recesses an Homeric catalogue of nations whose names it is difficult to pronounce and whose languages are as mysterious as their names. Of a total population in Transcaucasia of 4,186,000, the Armenians numbered upwards of 962,000 souls in 1886, or a proportion of nearly one quarter. But the importance of the Armenian element must be measured not so much by its numerical strength as by the solidarity of the Armenian people when compared to the peoples among whom they live. The Armenians are little divided by religious differences; the Roman Catholics are a mere handful among the solid ranks of the Gregorians; and the Gregorian Church is not only the symbol of national existence, but the stronghold of national hopes. Two other races in Transcaucasia slightly exceed the Armenians in number; the Tartars with 1,139,000, including Daghestan, and the different divisions of the Georgian family who number over a million souls. But the bitter religious antipathies of Sunni and Shiah divide the Tartars, and the Georgians are in a period of transition from their old feudal system to a new and more settled social order, while the union of their Church with the Orthodox Church of

Russia has deprived them of the natural rallying point for that community of sentiment which is based on a consciousness of race pride. Should the Russians become possessed of the Armenian provinces of the Turkish Empire, the most numerous as well as the most solid of the elements of population in Transcaucasia will be furnished by the Armenian race.

The distribution of the Armenians within the present limits of Russian Transcaucasia, but outside the area of the Armenian tableland, may be presented in a concise manner as follows :— In the Government of Elizabetpol, which includes Karabagh, they number 258,000; but only in the Governmental divisions of Shusha and Zangezur, that is to say in the tract of country between the Araxes on the east and the south-eastern shore of Lake Sevan on the west, do they constitute the numerically preponderating race; while in the other divisions and in the whole Government they are largely outnumbered by the Tartars. The Government of Tiflis contains nearly 212,000 Armenians, of whom I shall include 99,000 in my estimate for the tableland itself; the remainder are distributed over the other divisions of the Government, and in the town of Tiflis, where they attain the imposing number of 55,000 among a total population for the nineties of 145,000 souls. In the Government of Baku, out of a total Armenian population of 55,000 there are over 24,000 in the town of Baku itself, where they are engaged in commerce and in the oil works; they are also numerous in the town and district of Shemakha, which lies to the west of Baku. In the Government of Kutais they only number 16,000, and most of these reside in the towns.

The Armenians, being a commercial and industrial as well as an agricultural people, have spread themselves outside the natural limits of their country, attracted to the growing centres of industry upon its confines. They contribute a valuable and increasing element to the urban populations. But it is only when we have crossed the mountains which separate their highlands from the rest of Transcaucasia that we become conscious of treading upon Armenian soil. Throughout its extension from Akhalkalaki and Alexandropol on the north-east to Egin and Kharput on the south-west, that elevated stage of the Asiatic tablelands which we may still call Armenia bears the imprint of the individuality of the Armenian people to a greater degree than of any other race. In the immense expanse of these

Armenian landscapes—where blue lakes lie lapped in treeless plains, swelling with ochreous surface from hummock to hill, from hill to some long descending mountain outline that sweeps from the summit of a snow-crowned cone—the note which is uttered by man is lost. Yet there is scarcely a remote valley or lonely island which does not attract a band of pilgrims to worship in the beautiful monasteries which date from the times of the kings of Armenia and keep alive the story of the past. The fertile ground is for the most part tilled by an Armenian peasantry, whose burrows, resembling large ant-hills, are scarcely perceptible in the scene. All the machinery of whatever civilisation the land may possess is furnished by Armenians. The language which you most often hear is the somewhat harsh Armenian tongue; the legends and historical memories which attach to the great works of Nature have for the most part an Armenian origin. Over the area of the Armenian tableland, as it is delimited in the present work, these people are found in nearly double the numbers of any other race. In the preceding chapter I have established the natural frontiers of the country within Russian territory; and in the companion chapter of the second volume I shall hope to perform the same task in respect of the Turkish area. Our present concern is with the population of the Russian provinces of the tableland, which I have endeavoured to exhibit according to its various racial elements in the following tabular statement.

The little map, with which I accompany this table, will make plain to my reader the statistical area with which we are dealing. He will observe that it agrees in a general manner with the area enclosed by the natural frontier. It would not be possible to adapt exactly the statistical information at our disposal, based as it is upon Governmental units, to the geographical boundaries represented by the natural frontier; but those boundaries are so strongly marked that they correspond pretty closely with those of the administrative divisions. Only in two cases does the statistical area, as shown in the map within Russian territory, diverge in a marked degree from the geographical; and in both these cases it would have been easy to have made them approximately coincide. The one occurs about south of Tiflis, where I have preferred to include the ouezde of Borchali within the statistical area. It comprises a transitional region between the natural frontier and the valley of the Kur, presenting many of

TABLE II.—POPULATION OF THE ARMENIAN TABLELAND IN RUSSIA

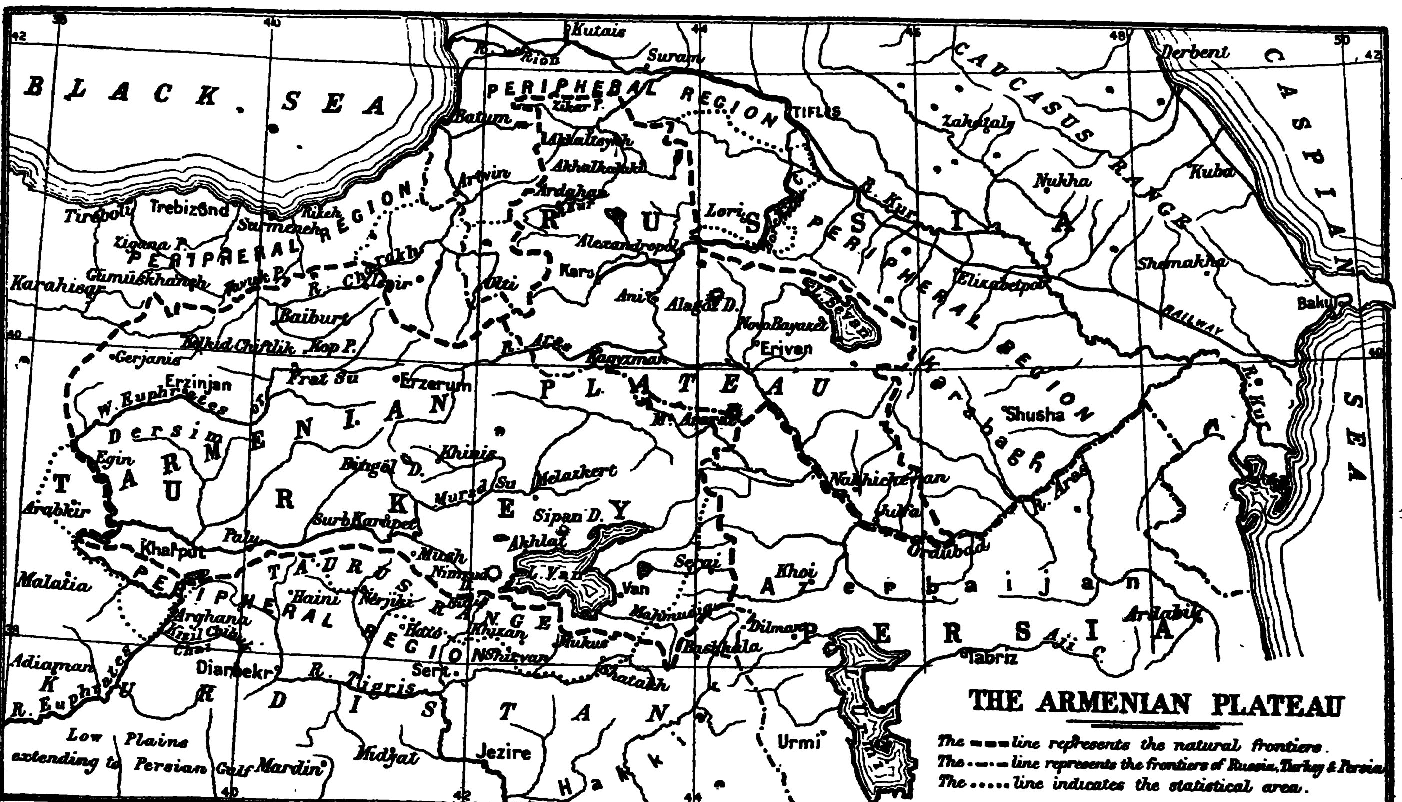
(Census of 1886 and figures of 1891 for Kars)

Nationality.	Govt. of Tiflis; ouezdes of Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsykh and Borchali.	Sq. Miles.	Govt. of Erivan.	Sq. Miles.	Govt. of Kars.	Sq. Miles.	Totals.	Total Square Miles.	Pop. per Sq. Mile.
Armenians	99,258		375,700		44,280		519,238		
Tartars	55,253		251,057		...		306,318		
Kurds	2,127		36,478		30,259		68,864		
Greeks	19,170		1,026		27,567		47,763		
Turks	31		...		46,954		46,985		
Georgians	31,069		33		...		31,102		
Russians	12,879		4,152		11,813		28,844		
Karapapakhs	...		...		27,247		27,247		
Turkomans	...		...		10,174		10,174		
Others	4,650		1,959		2,574		9,183[1]		
Total	224,437	4,585.85	670,405	10,074.75	200,868	7,307.29	1,095,710[2]	21,967.89[3]	49.877

[1] Including 2743 Jews, 2150 Assyrians, and 1665 Germans and Swedes.

[2] 8 per cent must be added to these figures if it be assumed that the number of females is at least equal to that of the males.

[3] This is the official figure. I make approximately the same area measure about 23,000 square miles, allowing for curvature of the earth.


BLACK . SEA
CASPIAN SEA
CAUCASUS RANGE
PERIPHERAL REGION
RUSSIA
ARMENIAN PLATEAU
TURKEY
TAURUS RANGE
PERSIA
Azerbaijan
KURDISTAN
Karabagh
Dersim
Hakki
Kutais
Surami
R. Rion
Batum
Tiflis
Zakatal
Nukha
Kuba
Derbent
Shemakha
Baku
Railway
R. Kur
Elizabetpol
Shusha
Trebizond
Tireboli
Rizeh
Surmeneh
Gümüshkhaneh
Karahisar
Baiburt
Kop P.
Erzerum
Erzinjan
Gerjanis
W. Euphrates
Frat Su
Kars
Alexandropol
Ardahan
Akhaltsykh
Akhalkalaki
Artvin
Lori
Ani
Alagöz D.
Erivan
Nova Bayazet
Nakhichevan
Julfa
Ordubad
R. Aras
Khinis
Melazkert
Murad Su
Bingöl D.
Sipan D.
Akhlat
L. Van
Van
Mush
Khoi
Dilman
Bashkala
Tabriz
Ardabil
Urmi
Egin
Arabkir
Kharput
Palu
Malatia
Arghana
Haini
Diarbekr
R. Tigris
Sert
Jezire
Midyat
Mardin
Adiaman
R. Euphrates
Low Plains extending to Persian Gulf
THE ARMENIAN PLATEAU
The ——— line represents the natural frontiers.
The -·-·- line represents the frontiers of Russia, Turkey & Persia.
The ······ line indicates the statistical area.

the characteristics of the tableland, and inhabited in considerable numbers by Armenians. The other is furnished by the administrative division of Olti, belonging to the Government of Kars. My reason for retaining it is principally because it corresponds on the east to the eastern limits of the Turkish vilayet of Erzerum on the west. Both these Governments, of Kars and of Erzerum, overlap into the Chorokh region; and in the case of Erzerum I have not been able to determine the exact boundaries of the overlapping administrative units. With these exceptions the natural area of the Armenian provinces in Russia corresponds fairly closely with the area comprised by the Governments of Erivan and Kars together with the ouezdes of Akhaltsykh, Akhalkalaki and Borchali, belonging to the Government of Tiflis. Karabagh I have excluded both from the geographical and from the statistical area, representing as it does an Armenia in miniature on the side of the Caspian Sea.

Further analysis of the figures which have just been presented would show that the stronghold of the Armenians, the locality in which they are most numerous, is the rich country through which the Arpa Chai flows on its way to join the middle course of the Araxes. There is situated the fortress and modern town of Alexandropol, which is inhabited almost exclusively by Armenians; and there are placed, a little further south, the remains of the ancient city of Ani, of which the deserted site still testifies to the state and splendour of their kings. The upland plains about Akhalkalaki on the north are dotted with Armenian villages; while the valley of the Araxes on the south, from Kagyzman to Erivan, and especially in the district of Edgmiatsin, contains a considerable Armenian population. The town and district of Novo-Bayazet, on the western shore of Lake Sevan, is for the greater part Armenian. On the other hand, the eastern portion of the Araxes valley, commencing from the town of Ordubad, is held in large numbers by the Tartars, who run the Armenians close in the extensive and important area which is covered by the Government of Erivan. It must be remembered, in reference to the Armenian population of the Russian provinces, that their numbers have been considerably augmented by emigration from Turkey and Persia. It is computed that not less than 10,000 families from the district of Erzerum followed the Russian army out of Turkey in 1829; and numbers of their countrymen —it is said not less than 40,000—had already accompanied the

same force from the frontier districts of Persia when it retired from Tabriz at the Peace of Turkomanchai.

Next to the Armenians, the most numerous element in the population are the Tartars, who extend from the Persian frontier up the valley of the Araxes, and cover with their settlements the eastern districts of the plateau region and the whole of Karabagh. The Tartars of Transcaucasia represent a section of those warriors of Turkish race who, from the time of the appearance of the Seljuks down to the end of the eighteenth century, were driven to this country by political conditions from the northern provinces of Persia—that is, from Azerbaijan, and from the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea. Their language is still the *lingua franca* of the districts between Caucasus and the Armenian plateau. Within the area with which we are now dealing they belong almost entirely to the Shiah sect, and, besides sharing the religion of Persia, contain an admixture of Persian blood. It is not so long ago that their seats in Armenia formed a Persian khanate, and were administered by Persian sirdars; and the wealthy families who flourished during that period are still the owners of extensive gardens, and live on the proceeds of their land. In the humbler walks of life they are distinguished by their skill in all those methods of working mud which are practised in the East; they are plasterers, wall-makers, skilled men in the construction of works of irrigation; while most of the little tradesmen, the hucksters and fruit-sellers are Tartars, and many of the gardeners and drivers of carts. In the country they have passed from the nomadic stage, and are prosperous settlers upon the land. In the town of Erivan, where their numbers equal those of the Armenians, many of the largest gardens are owned by Tartar families, and many of the most prosperous houses of business are in Tartar hands. The degree of religious tolerance which they have achieved in that town was a matter of extreme astonishment to me, when I remembered how often I had in vain resented the bigotry of the Shiahs while travelling within the dominions of the Shah. The Persians are unable to enforce reciprocity in their country, and to repay us for the pleasure and the profit which they may derive in inspecting the great religious buildings of Europe by suppressing and impounding the vicious fanatics who drive us from the doors of their mosques. It is a pleasure to offer a well-deserved tribute to that sense of respect for themselves and for their religion of which the Shiahs of

Erivan give so striking a proof by admitting the stranger, whatever his creed, into the innermost courts of their spacious and beautiful mosque; and it is not imprudent to hope and to expect that the narrow path which they are still treading may widen as the years increase. On the other hand, it is not without disappointment that we may note the small progress they have hitherto made in availing themselves of the opportunities of education which the Russian Government have placed within their reach. I have drawn attention to this circumstance in my notice of the schools of Erivan; and it is safe to prophesy that, unless a radical change be soon effected, the Tartars will be edged out by the Armenians and will diminish in numbers year by year.

The remaining peoples native to the country upon whom it is necessary to bestow a passing glance are the Kurds, the Greeks, the Turks, the Georgians and the Karapapakhs. The Kurds within Russian territory have not yet abandoned their nomadic habits; they are found as far north as the country about Batum, but their principal pasture-grounds are on the Turkish frontier and in Karabagh. The Kurds in the neighbourhood of Ararat pursue two main directions during their summer wanderings; one body proceeds towards the north, through the districts of Edgmiatsin and Alexandropol, and stations itself upon the highlands about Akhaltsykh and Akhalkalaki; the other takes an easterly course and enters the Government of Elizabetpol. The total number of Kurds in Transcaucasia is given as 100,000, of whom the larger part inhabit within the area with which we are concerned; the rest are found in greatest number in Karabagh. The Greeks have several villages, principally in the Government of Kars; those which I saw were prosperous, and the gay dresses and trinkets of the women betokened a somewhat higher stage of comfort than that which is usual in the country as a whole. These Greeks speak Turkish and are learning Russian; their versatile genius enables them to change nationality as we take a change of air. They are excellent miners and road engineers; the fine *chaussée* which has recently been completed up the valley of the Toporovan river to Akhalkalaki was constructed by the skilled labour of Greek workmen. The small number of Georgians who are included in our area are found, as would be expected, in the valley of the Kur. In many places the race has received such a large admixture of Turkish blood that the inhabitants,

although classed as Georgians, would call themselves Turks, and are in religion Mussulman. In such villages I found much discontent with the existing order, and the evident outward signs of breaking up and decay. The Turks are found almost exclusively in the Government of Kars, which is also the seat of a hybrid tribe called Karapapakhs, or "Black Caps," from the black lambskin caps which they wear. The origin of the German and of the Russian settlers has already been described in the course of this work (see Ch. VII.); the latter belong almost exclusively to the Dukhobortsy and Molokan sects, expelled by the Russian Church-State from the home provinces of the Russian Empire. The Dukhobortsy must have diminished in numbers to an appreciable extent since the date of these statistics, owing to the recent emigration of large numbers into the bosom of the British Empire (p. 116).

When one reflects upon the social condition of the country, no circumstance is perhaps more striking than the complete separation of one race from another. Although living side by side, there is an entire absence of natural fusion of the different elements upon a common plane. Cases exist both in the Russian and in the Turkish provinces of Armenia where, from a sense of advantage or by compulsion, the people of a particular district have adopted the Mussulman religion during periods of Mussulman persecution, and have become, by intermarriage and closer intercourse, absorbed into the dominant race. I may instance in Russian Armenia the Georgian inhabitants of the valley of the Upper Kur, and across the Turkish frontier the Armenians of the Tortum district and the Greeks of many of the valleys of the peripheral region. But such examples have only aggravated the differences to which separation is due. They have converted the existing prejudices into animosities, and have retarded rather than advanced any tendency towards fusion. When Russia appeared on the scene, it might have been expected that at least in the case of Christians of various professions and nationalities a disposition to draw together might have made itself felt. As a matter of fact the reverse has been the case. To the old religious breaches has been added a new barrier—the hungry Russian Orthodox Church. Certainly in the case of a marriage between a Russian sectary and an Armenian—and I believe also in that of the other professions, should, for instance, an Armenian of the Gregorian persuasion wed a Protestant of the

same nation—the children of such a mixed union are required by Russian law to be brought up in the Russian Orthodox faith. It makes no difference that neither of the parents professes that faith. The result has, therefore, been that the old heterogeneous collection have been increased by two more species of the Christian happy family—the Molokans and Dukhobortsy.* And upon both is riveted isolation from their neighbours—or in the alternative the necessity of educating their children in a creed and religious system which they abhor.

In such circumstances very little has been effected by the Russian settlers towards raising the standards already prevailing in their adopted country. Inasmuch as these sectaries belong to the flower of the peasantry in Russia, one should, perhaps, regret the presence of any artificial barriers. It is true that they do not stand as high in the scale of peoples as their Armenian neighbours with their ancient but deeply corroded culture and their natural aptitudes—these, happily, unimpaired. But in moral force the Russians are easily superior; and their methods of agriculture, if they were generally followed in the country, would produce an economical revolution. Up to the present time their example has been thrown away. Their neat stone houses, spacious carts, ploughs and field implements have not inspired the Armenians to forsake their ancestral habits—to improve the means of cultivation, and to emerge from their unhealthy burrows into the light and comfort of glass windows and solid walls of stone. This barrenness of result is, no doubt, in part due to the manner in which the Russian immigration took place. Expelled from their native country, the peasants came in whole villages, with their women and their children and their household goods. Their new settlements were grouped together and rendered self-sufficient; and neither the necessities nor the inducements of social intercourse drew them away from their own circles. To the traveller as well as to the native they are a piece of Russia laid down in Armenia; the curious stare and pass on. As an outpost of the northern empire they can be of little value owing to the religious opinions which they profess. It is well known in the country that the Government are reserving vast tracts of land in the hope that some day Russian colonists, these, it is expected, of the Orthodox faith, may be attracted to these salubrious uplands. The climate would suit them well. Should the Germans realise their scheme of colonising Asia Minor, an ethnical redistribution would be

accomplished on a large scale. But the population of the country is at present so scanty and its resources so vast, that the Armenians have little to fear from such a development.

Let us now proceed to the political side of our subject, and endeavour to measure the system of government under which these various peoples live. It will be interesting to keep in view both their dispositions towards it and the results, material and moral, which it may be considered to have brought about.

The administration by Russia of the north-eastern half of Armenia has been occupied with races whose more recent political history consists in their passage from one domination to another; and the presence of discontent in certain quarters may be regarded as the inevitable outcome of the change. The Mussulman adherents of the old Turkish dominion share with their neighbours of Turkish origin the humiliation of a fallen state; and their Turkish sympathies and connections, while they excite the suspicions of the Russian Government, dispose them to yield to the lightest pressure, and to cross the border into Turkish soil.[1] The Armenians, who have been a mainstay to Russia both in her Persian and in her Turkish wars, whose lands were swept by the tide of battle, and who can recall the memory of conflicts which extended even to the walls of their sanctuary, the cloister of Edgmiatsin, are inclined to temper their sentiments of gratitude with the consciousness of the services which they rendered—services which many among them may be disposed to consider have only resulted in the imposition of a fresh and more burdensome yoke. North of the tableland the Georgian races, whose kingdom, harassed by Mohammedan peoples, was driven to seek assistance outside, have not yet forgotten the disappointment of the hope which many among them had cherished, that Russian intervention might assume the form of a protectorate rather than of a complete absorption of the Georgian element into the Russian State. But such regrets and disillusionments are but the familiar sequel to the constitution of empire upon a new soil; and human nature under such circumstances is more prone to count the loss than to recognise the gain. Over twenty years have now elapsed since Russia completed her subjugation of the Caucasus, whose peoples, untamed for so long a period, menaced the base of her advance; order and peace have been given to the country, and life and property are safe. Georgian children are no longer sold into

[1] See especially Ch. III. p. 68 and Ch. IV. pp. 75, 77.

slavery, and a middle class is forming amongst that people, whose traditional relation to one another was that of noble and serf. An experienced traveller, who visited the Armenian provinces in 1868, and passed through the more fertile regions of the country between Kars and Kagyzman, has left on record a striking picture of the misery of those Mussulman times. He was crossing the district of Shuragel, the ancient Shirak of the Armenians; and he speaks of deserted towns and villages, of Armenian peasants who clung to their ruined homes with a pertinacity of affection which neither poverty nor oppression could subdue, of the dispossession of the Christians by the Turkish Beys, and of the exactions and forays of the Kurds, which had curtailed agriculture and stifled industry, and had reduced both to the extreme limit on which human life is able to subsist.[1] If, at the present time, the Armenian peasant gathers for himself the crops which he has sown, and the restless Kurd consults his safety by a sober respect for the law, it is to Russia that the people owe this deliverance from the license and anarchy of former years.

Had the Russian Government confined its energies to the amiable and disinterested task of establishing and maintaining public order as the guardian of a distracted country and the knight-errant who clears the land of thieves, it would have received the ungrudging gratitude of the Armenians, until in the maturity of time they had learnt to walk unaided and to cope alone with those lawless elements which might still resist the yoke of law. When that happy state had been accomplished it might only be natural to suppose that the progressive tendencies of the Armenian would lead him to take counsel with his neighbours and friends, to thank his protectors for past benefits, and to submit that the continuance of foreign tutelage was no longer necessary or desirable in the interests of a country to whose welfare they had contributed so much. To the Russians such a possible, but I think improbable, outcome of all their efforts was scarcely calculated to present so rosy an appearance as their ingenuous wards might have expected or hoped, and, if the advantages offered by the Russian Empire were not sufficiently apparent by themselves, it was necessary to reform and to educate a perversity which sooner or later would yield. The Russians are not a commercial people, and would be content to see the Armenians

[1] Consul Taylor, an unpublished Report.

conduct the commerce of their native country and develop its vast resources, could they but collect the means; but only on one condition were they prepared to encourage such activity: that their subjects should become Russians, and that the province should be joined to the Russian Empire not only by the slender thread of annexation, but by the abiding tie of a common patriotism founded on a community of sentiment with themselves. But just at this point the real difficulties of empire arise. Races who stand on a low scale in Nature have become absorbed into the Russian system by the exertion of little further energy than was required to ingrain in them that wholesome respect for their northern conqueror which the first sharp conflict had inspired; and the *broad, expansive Russian character* has been able to assimilate them to itself. It is different when, whatever the degree of degradation to which they may have been reduced by Mussulman oppression, a people is conscious of elements of vitality impelling them to higher ideals and standards than those which guide the powerful protectors under whom they have commenced to breathe. An empire which is confronted with such a situation has few alternatives among which to choose. If it cannot attract the subject people towards it—if it cannot accomplish that task of self-change which is more difficult than any problem which the exercise of empire may present—it will sooner or later be driven to adopt the expedients of coercion and repression, and to lower the plane of civilised life by arresting the race for progress in which it was itself unfitted to compete.

Such a political situation can best be gauged and appreciated if we approach it from several different points of view—the nature of the Russian system, the attitude of Armenians in particular towards it, the true significance of such struggles in the larger issues of the outside world. . . . The kindness and hospitality of the Russian people, the amiable disposition which, in spite of official exigencies, makes them wish the traveller well, the real desire which a large and increasing number among them cherish for social progress at home—are features in the Russian character which the shortest acquaintance will recognise with respect, and which make for the true advance of Russia as a civilised nation among her peers. But the moment that the elements of progress in Russia have asserted their right to rule, the Russian system, as we know it, will die and disappear, and the laws which govern its existence will be subject to new conditions, which may make

for closer national concentration rather than for expansion abroad. Such reflections, although not new, are pertinent in this place. The element of finality, always relative, may justly appear in the eyes of many Armenians to be wanting to the political system and to the Government under which they live; and the abhorrence which that system inspires tempts them to convert the thought into a wish. The ultimate outcome of any revolution in the affairs of Russia is too uncertain, and the present evils of her Government are too substantial and apparent to induce them willingly to cast in their lot with the Russian people, and to abandon their hope of fulfilling their destiny in their own manner and, if possible, by themselves.

A people whose commercial activity has brought them into contact with the most progressive races of Europe, and whose natural instinct renders them eager to assimilate Western thought, can scarcely be blamed if they chafe under a system which assumes to establish the opinions they shall hold and to select the books which they shall read, and which subjects every action of their daily life to an inquisitorial control. Such methods are only the manifestations of a settled and uniform plan. The Armenian must sink his individuality and resign his initiative into Russian hands. He must imbue himself with the ideas which his rulers have prepared for him, and which may be opposed to the tendencies and the capacities with which he has been endowed. In such a prospect he recognises nothing to admire and much to fear. He sees the more capable races either driven from the Russian Empire or made the object of a constant jealousy and antipathy rather than of increasing respect. He feels the grip of an organisation which is founded on European methods, and commands all the resources which those methods provide; but he distrusts the hands which wield these weapons, and he is indifferent to the objects to which they are turned. Even the material results of such a system leave him little to hope beyond what he has attained. The resources of the country still lie dormant, and the Government seems to lack the means or else the will to turn them to account. He sees the rich forests of the peripheral region, which might yield a considerable revenue in return for an outlay which would be comparatively small, left unexploited and neglected, while shiploads of wood are entering the ports to supply the requirements of the oil industry. That industry itself he sees promoted by foreign capital in Russian

guise, while the jealousy of all foreign capital has closed the door to its beneficent action in the provinces of his home. Only a single military railway traverses the tableland, and there is scarcely a road upon it except such as are rendered necessary by the exigencies of the military arm. A few examples of the economical condition of these provinces may emphasise and explain such statements of a general kind. The two principal towns are Alexandropol and Erivan; yet the road which joins them makes the colossal circuit by the northern shore of Lake Sevan, where it meets the main avenue of traffic between Tiflis and Erivan. From a point further west on this roundabout line of communication a road has been cut with the laudable object of shortening the distance; but the same contempt for the smaller and more irksome duties of life to which we become accustomed in purely Eastern countries has allowed it to fall into ruin by neglect, and we are met by the sight, so familiar to the traveller in the East, of yawning culverts and broken bridges and parallel tracks which have diverged and avoided the perilous surface of the metalled way. In Erivan itself, the chief town of a district where capital might be turned to the greatest advantage, it is impossible or difficult to find a foreign newspaper, while the industrial skill of the advanced races of Europe is not represented by a single foreign enterprise, or, so far as I know, by a single foreign man of business or industrial employee. Persons who know the country well have told me that from the point of view of irrigation, so important a requirement in a land which suffers from want of rain, it has gone back since the times of the Persians, who are experts in such arts. As a consequence of this economical stagnation, the spectacle is often presented in a country which enjoys security and repose of miserable villages, pinched by the scantiest resources and in appearance not more prosperous than those on Turkish soil. I cannot help thinking that many of these evils are due to excessive centralisation in the Russian capital. When the Governor of the Transcaucasian provinces was a Grand Duke residing at Tiflis, he was able to gratify his personal interest in their welfare by the exercise of a large measure of independent initiative and control; at the present day the smallest projects are referred to St. Petersburg, and are made subservient to the general economic policy which governs the Empire as a whole. But such an explanation serves only to display and emphasise the character of the Russian

system itself: how small are the prospects which it offers in return for the leaden yoke which it brings.

Little by little, as all danger on the side of the Mussulman states has gradually disappeared, the Russian Government have considered it opportune to apply more drastic methods, and to impose upon the newest of their adopted children a fuller measure of the disciplinary régime. With what instruments they have worked, and how first the Church and next the schools have been the objects of their relentless embrace, has been already told in the foregoing chapters, notably those on Erivan and Edgmiatsin. On their side the Armenians have shown no disposition to adopt Russian ways of thought. The greater has grown the pressure, the more they have writhed and twisted; at the present moment they are lying still with broken wings. The situation is cruel in the extreme. From the Turkish provinces they are beaten up towards the Russian frontier by bands of long-beaked, predatory Kurds. Should they reach their asylum, they are caught in the meshes of a quite impervious network; they are sorted and sifted about by a swarm of active little officials—the police of the districts, the police of the towns, the political police. Camps are instituted where the great majority will be detained at pleasure, to be returned on the first opportunity to their rifled homes. The repetition of this process is causing the decimation of the Armenian people in a surer and much more efficacious manner than any massacres. It is true that the amelioration if not the removal of such conditions lies to some extent in their own hands. "Accept our system, follow the Georgians, and seek spiritual and political salvation within the bosom of the Russian Church-State." One cannot doubt that in that event the whole weight of the great Russian Empire would be thrown into the scale for the Armenians. What a tempting prospect for a people so sorely tried! Will they not before very long subscribe this obvious solution, for which there is so much to be said? I have put the question to all the Armenians with whom I have enjoyed opportunities of intercourse, and I have put it to those one or two European Consuls who have been in Armenia and know the Armenians well. The answer has invariably been in a negative sense. Many Armenians go so far as to openly profess their preference for the Turkish Government. They state the matter neatly in the form of an antithesis. It is a choice between two Oppressions, one physical

and spasmodic, the other moral and systematic. It is not the first time in history that they have been offered the alternative of slavery in body or slavery in mind. A remnant may be absorbed; but the majority will follow their destiny, will wander out, and, perhaps, disappear.

Such is the conclusion, so full of pathos, with such a vein of unconscious satire, throwing curious side lights upon the gilded figures of *Christianity* and *Empire* marching down purple steps with arms entwined. . . . My reader who may know the Armenians from his sad experience of an Armenian dragoman picked up in the Levant, will not, perhaps, be disposed to view the ruin of that people with feelings of keen regret. For myself, coming to the subject free from any prepossessions, but with the lessons of extensive travel in the countries west of India fresh imprinted on my mind, I must freely confess to exactly contrary sentiments. We are living in a time of startling changes in Asia; we are witnesses of one of those great waves from Europe upon Asia of which the tide-marks have all but vanished from the sands of the Present after many centuries of repose and stagnation. Some diversion of the current, it is true, has taken place towards Africa; but the reservoirs of Europe are being filled in a much greater measure than they are depleted by issues in that direction. A new and, to all appearances, a permanent factor of immense potentiality in its reflex influence upon the economy and diplomacy of Europe has arisen in the shape of the United States of America. American competition is already obliging the industrial states of Europe to compose those ancient quarrels which have so often exhausted their great resources, and which have been so long exploited with success by Oriental rulers. Day by day new inventions are annihilating the old-world obstacles of distance and of time. Asia is brought to our doors; and, when we lift the veil in which she has so long slumbered, there is nothing beneath but her fair frame and the flimsiest web of human littleness, yielding to the first and most clumsy attempt to brush it aside.

Nepioi!—We are surely simpletons if through motives of adventure and cupidity we fondly cherish the vision of this long-lost continent parcelled out like virgin ground among ourselves. The Asiatic, with all his debility, is not the African; he is our father, from whose lips we received our first lessons, and his old age, become almost child-like, contains the germs of rejuvenescence,

like the gods of ancient Greece. Tenderly and with affection should we approach these old races whom Providence has conducted to our threshold. They will repay us for our forbearance and solicitude. They worship strength; but the display of power in a brutal and ruthless spirit betrays in their eyes, who have seen the passage of so many despotisms, underlying elements of present weakness and certain failure. In some condition, one cannot help feeling, they are likely to survive us, the richer or the poorer for the example and imprint which we may have bestowed.

In the Armenians we have a people who are peculiarly adapted to be the intermediaries of the new dispensation. They profess our religion, are familiar with some of our best ideals, and assimilate each new product of European culture with an avidity and thoroughness which no other race between India and the Mediterranean has given any evidence of being able to rival. These capacities they have made manifest under the greatest of disadvantages—as a subject race ministering to the needs of Mussulman masters. They know well that with every advance of true civilisation they are sure to rise as they will certainly fall at each relapse.

For nearly a thousand years they have been held in subjection; and it would be folly to expect that they should not have suffered in character by the menial pursuits which they have been constrained to follow. They have been *rayas*, exploited by races most often their inferiors in intellect; and I need not enlarge upon the results which have followed from such a condition. One should rather wonder that their defects are not more pronounced.

On the other hand, they are possessed of virtues with which they are seldom credited. The fact that in Turkey they are rigorously precluded from bearing arms has disposed superficial observers to regard them as cowards. A different judgment might be meted out were they placed on an equality in this respect with their enemies the Kurds. At all events, when given the chance, they have not been slow to display martial qualities both in the domain of the highest strategy and in that of personal prowess. The victorious commander-in-chief for Russia in her Asiatic campaign of 1877 was an Armenian from the district of Lori—Loris Melikoff. In the same campaign the most brilliant general of division in the Russian army was an Armenian—

Tergukasoff.[1] The gallant young staff-officer, Tarnaieff, who planned and led the hair-brained attack on the Azizi fort in front of Erzerum, was an Armenian, and paid for his daring with his life. At the present day the frontier police, engaged in controlling the Kurds of the border, are recruited from among Armenians. These examples may be sufficient to nail to the counter an inveterate lie, from which the Armenians have suffered, at least in British estimation, more, perhaps, than from any other supposed defect.

If I were asked what characteristics distinguish the Armenians from other Orientals, I should be disposed to lay most stress on a quality known in popular speech as *grit*. It is this quality to which they owe their preservation as a people, and they are not surpassed in this respect by any European nation. Their intellectual capacities are supported by a solid foundation of character, and, unlike the Greeks, but like the Germans, their nature is averse to superficial methods; they become absorbed in their tasks and plumb them deep. There is no race in the Nearer East more quick of learning than the Persians; yet should you be visited by a Persian gentleman accompanied by his Armenian man of business, take a book down from your shelves, better one with illustrations, and, the conversation turning upon some subject treated by its author, hand it to them after a passing reference. The Persian will look at the pictures, which he may praise. The Armenian will devour the book, and at each pause in the conversation you will see him poring over it with knitted brows. These tendencies are naturally accompanied by forethought and balance; and they have given the Armenian his pre-eminence in commercial affairs. He is not less clever than the Greek; but he sees further, and, although ingrained with the petty vices of all Oriental traders, the Armenian merchant is quick to appreciate the advantages of fair dealing when they are suggested by the condi-

[1] "The manner in which he (Tergukasoff) handled his men at Taghir on the 16th of June, when, with eight battalions, he thoroughly defeated the twelve which Mahomed Pasha opposed to him; the stubborn resistance with which he checked Mukhtar Pasha's onslaught on the 21st at Eshek Khaliass; the gallant retreat which his half division effected in front of Ahmed Pasha's twenty-three battalions; and, finally, his dashing flank march from Igdyr to Bayazid, and the relief of that place in front of two Turkish corps, both superior to him in numbers, stamp him a general of division of the first class. Had the Czar many more like him, this war would have been completed a month ago." C. B. Norman (*Times* war correspondent), *Armenia and the Campaign of 1877*, London, n.d. p. 247. In most cases when Armenians enter the Russian service they Russianise their names by turning the Armenian termination -ean into the Russian -off, as Melikean into Melikoff.

tions under which his vocation is pursued. A friend with a large experience of the Balkans, with their heterogeneous urban populations, has told me, as an interesting fact, that in the statistics of bankruptcy for those countries the proportion of Armenians implicated is comparatively low. Inasmuch as such bankruptcies are usually more or less of a fraudulent nature, the fact indicates not, perhaps, so much the greater integrity of Armenians, as their power to resist an immediate temptation and their promptitude in recognising the monetary value of commercial stability.

But in order to estimate this people at anything like their true worth, one should study them not in the Levant, with its widespread corruption, but in the Russian provinces of Armenia. Here they have most successfully utilised the interval between the period when the sword of Russia was the sword of the deliverer and that present-day period when the principles which inspire her rulers are those of Pan-orthodoxy and Panslavism. I was so much surprised by the results achieved, and by the contrast which was offered between the sterling progress of this newly-emancipated population and the stagnation and progressive relapse of their neighbours of different nationality, spread over the whole wide area of the Nearer Asia, that, without any certain previous purpose, I resolved to pursue the study further and to protract the journey into Turkish territory. For what was it that I saw? In every trade and in every profession, in business and in the Government services the Armenian was without a rival and in full possession of the field. He equips the postal service by which you travel, and if you are so fortunate as to find an inn the landlord will be an Armenian. Most of the villages in which you sojourn are inhabited by a brawny Armenian peasantry. In the towns, if the local governor attaches to your service the head of the local police, it will be a stalwart Armenian in Russian uniform who will find you either a lodging or a shady garden in which to erect your tents. If you remark on the way some well-built edifice which aspires to architectural design, it will be the work of an Armenian builder from Alexandropol. In that city itself, where the Armenians are most numerous, the love of building, which was so marked a characteristic of their forefathers, has blossomed again among kinder circumstances; a spacious cathedral and several large churches stand among new stone houses fronted with ambitious façades. In Erivan each richer merchant has lodged himself in an agreeable villa, of which the Italian architec-

ture rises from the shade of poplars and willows and fruit trees laden with fruit. The excellent wine which is found in Erivan is made according to the newest methods by an Armenian who has studied for two years in Germany the most modern appliances of the industry in Europe. The monetary transactions of the country are in the hands of Armenian bankers. The skilled workmen—jewellers, watchmakers, carpenters—are Armenians. Even the ill-mienned officer of mounted frontier police, whose long association with the wilder elements—Kurds and robbers of small and large degree—has lent him the appearance of a chief of brigands, will bear, not much to its honour, an Armenian name. The large majority of the people do not speak Russian, or speak it very imperfectly. Indeed, were it not for the fact that the governors and chief police officials of large districts are Russians, and that Cossacks and Russian regular soldiers may here and there be seen, the traveller would not suspect that he was in a Russian province, and would go the way he listed with the most serene composure until he was rudely awakened by some abrupt collision with the Russian system and brought to his proper mind. As it is, the Armenian has edged out the Russian, and, if Peace were allowed her conquests unhindered, he would ultimately rule in the land.

Such a situation is suggestive; nor can we feel surprise if the Armenian has exercised his Oriental imagination upon it in a manner less prudent than may be calculated to appeal to the slower veined races of the West. The idea of a modern Armenian kingdom has set the spark to that national enthusiasm which the perusal of his historical records has fed. The example of Eastern Europe has seemed to justify his speculations. When I come to deal with the Turkish provinces, I shall endeavour to show the falseness of such premisses; but I do not believe that any such details have influenced his somewhat more general conceptions, and they are not pertinent here. The vision of an independent Armenian state, could it be realised in a remote future, will not appeal to all minds alike. Many will see a real danger to human progress in the creation of these small states. The national sentiment they would place among those realised ideals upon which, as our civilisation widens, it is necessary to build anew. The magnitude of the conflict, should any of the greater nations enter the arena of war, acts as a wholesome preventive to ambitions which the small state is prone to indulge on the least

pretence. The gratification of such ambitions causes bad administration and ends in bankruptcy, while few of the advantages which are offered by a great empire can the people of a little country enjoy. Such considerations have great weight, and it would probably be well if, whenever it were practicable, our political actions were founded upon them; yet they scarcely indicate a solution in the present case. The Armenian, who is a convert to such views, might justly ask in what quarter he should look. The Turkish Empire will not even protect him, and massacres its Armenian subjects; while, should he turn his eyes to Russia, he sees no prospects of material advantage which would enable him to rise above the economic stage to which he has already attained, and surrender to Russian ideals could only be effected in his opinion at the price of moral and intellectual annihilation. Confronted with such an outlook, he seeks refuge within himself; and, should he consult his more sober perceptions, he will labour in silence and without ostentation to supply the requirements which his race still needs; to raise the peasant from his present degradation, to purify the Church, to promote the interest of his richer neighbours in work for the common good. These are the more legitimate ambitions which, however tedious, are certain of success, and which will establish, whatever be the revolution of politics, his right to influence the history of his country as one of the only stable native elements of progress in the Nearer East.

If, before concluding these reflections, we turn to the broader issues upon which such questions bear, and, having examined the comparative failure of Russia in Armenia, consider its significance to the larger world, we may find that the very strength of the Russian system as a powerful factor in international life derives from the self-same character which has denied her victory here. Had Russia through a natural process of attraction been able to draw towards her the higher races who stood on her path, she would have been a greater nation, but perhaps a less formidable force. Round her she groups the less cultivated peoples—the nomads of Asia, the wanderers of the steppe—and arms them with the might of a European organisation which the intellect of Europe, impressed into her service, perfects as a weapon for her use. The dangers which such results threaten can only imperil the improvident and those whose nervous powers are unstrung; but the world has not yet advanced sufficiently to render those dangers

unreal. The indolence of mind which shrinks from facing difficulties and leaves them to solve themselves is not the least element of weakness in her European neighbours by which Russia profits and through which she grows; but the victory will now as always be given to those states which unite with a higher civilisation a spirit of enterprise still healthy and powers still unimpaired.

END OF VOL. I

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